A WAY TO GO

CURRICULUM NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASE	Australian Association of Special Education
AAMR	American Association on Mental Retardation
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AEC	Australian Education Council
BBEP	Broad Banded Equity Program
CURASS	Curriculum Assessment Committee of the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education
DEA	Department of Education and the Arts (Tasmania)
DEET	Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LSW	Launceston Student Workshop
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MID	Mild Intellectual Disability
MDT	Materials, Design and Technology
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
NSES	National Strategy for Equity in Schooling
ROA	Records of Achievement
ROD	Records of Development
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education

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Everyone hears only what he understands.
JOHANN VAN GOETHE
If a man does not know to which port he is sailing, no wind is favourable
SENECA

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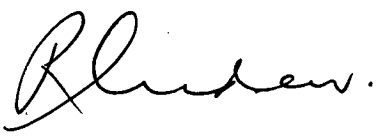
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institute, college or university, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



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ABSTRACT

The focus of debate around the issue of equity and schooling has concentrated mainly upon *access* as a rights conditional to social justice, rather than the *curriculum* undertaken by students who are included in regular schools. This study first sought to describe and find priorities for the curriculum needs of young adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID) and second, to determine criteria by which stakeholders might evaluate the appropriateness of curriculum undertaken by MID students.

Individuals from a spread of stakeholder groups were surveyed. They responded to paragraph-length vignettes which described the schooling experiences of six students from both regular and special settings in a school District of North-eastern Tasmania. The stakeholder groups were teachers, parents, peers, employers, community agency professionals, administrators and taxpayers. Complementing the surveys, separate interviews were conducted over a two-and a half-year period with the six target students, their parents and their teachers. Research questions focused on the curriculum needs of MID adolescents, agreement in the perceptions of stakeholders with regard to the needs expressed, the balance of curriculum domains available to students in regular secondary school programs and the discrepancy between the 'needed' and the 'undertaken' curricula.

Results indicated that: (1) the content and outcomes of non-academic curriculum domains were clearly favoured over those of the traditional academic curriculum domain; (2) the students' highest priorities (i.e., of social adjustments and life skills) were not reflected in the assessment records given most attention by teachers and the educational system; (3) alternative programs and assessment models were recognised by stakeholders as most important to school and post-school outcomes; (4) community-referenced, ecologically planned, cross-contextual learning was valued highly but not readily available; (5) while employers favoured more academic domain engagement for MID adolescents than did other stakeholders, they placed greatest importance on non-academic skills (e.g., punctuality and impulse control) of employees; and (6) proximal stakeholders and employers favoured earlier and more workplace experience for MID adolescents.

The results have been used to propose several criteria for appropriate curriculum. Through a consideration of these, educators and advocates might design provisions that better meet the curriculum needs of students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. The study has indicated that secondary schools' curricula fall short of meeting several of the criteria derived from the results. Given that students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities are the largest group affected by several states' inclusion initiatives, the study has strong implications for equity in the researched context and beyond.

PROLOGUE

I am walking along the corridor of a District High School in the North-east of Tasmania, having been asked to look in on Luke, a young man who has "dropped his bundle". According to his Social Sciences teacher who is "about to drop *her* bundle", the thirteen year old is on strike, refusing to open his books. At unpredictable times, he will cause mayhem in her room by making poorly timed, "rude" comments. In the swirl of distressed talk, I've forgotten the teacher's name, but I've gone ahead on my mission as visiting Support Teacher to help plan an 'effective' intervention.

In the corridor is a caretaker removing some unwanted furniture. I stop her to ask where Luke Timmins' class might be.

"I'll show you, love," she says, in a chirpy voice. Before I have a chance to qualify my question, she opens the nearest classroom door, scans the room, and at loudhailer volume declares, "That's him there, the one in the corner, the tall one in blue".

All imagination of a subtle introduction and a sidling-in on "the problem" have gone right out the window in one short, candid burst of help from the caretaker. At the far corner of the room, sitting alone and staring now even harder at the lino floor is my quarry. A short glance at the teacher who nods me onward and I am sitting on one of the vacant chairs beside Luke. The class goes on. It's no novelty having their Luke visited. "Speechies", Guidance officers , teaching assistants, all have had their turns at saving his and his teacher's "bundle".

"Why have they asked me to come and see you?" I ask Luke in the most innocent voice I can muster.

"I'm not making any trouble," he says without eye contact. "I just learn slower than the rest of them. Nobody gives a stuff what they get me to do."

Luke's situation is like so many others that I have been asked to address in collaboration with other school and District providers of support and intervention. One has to consciously stop the impulse to presume that this young man is a product of poor parenting or poor pastoral care or poor peer modelling. Despite trying hard in his primary days, Luke is a very slow learner when it comes to academic subjects. He reads only single line caption books with any comfort. He has patchy knowledge of number

bonds to ten and refuses to write stories without their being scribed. His primary school history shows him to be a likeable child with fragile self-esteem that can sometimes erupt from frustration. He is socially immature and is usually last chosen for inclusion in free play. His home is stable, loving and even protective. He has brothers and sisters younger than him who are among the "top of their classes".

On the Guidance Officer's IQ test, Luke "scored" 68. As far as categories go, that makes him a student with "Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID)". For the two years previous to this, he received the support of a District-funded special teachers' aide. This year, however, because of his ability relative to students elsewhere in contention for aide assistance, Luke is "too able" to attract any more District funding. But he hasn't changed. Nor has his school. He continues to receive aide time, however his help is now precariously funded from the school's 'beleaguered' budget.

The research reported in the following chapters was stimulated by many encounters such as the one retold. The question in my mind has frequently been: "Why are these students reasonably happy at primary ages but so often miserable following the transition to high school ? Why do they seem to have so little sense of self-worth?"

Of course, not every teenage student with Mild Intellectual Disabilities that I have taught or have been called in to "help" has been distressed. Some have reasonably uncomplicated school experiences. Further questions, then, arise. "What is it about the ones who survive and even go on to post-compulsory schooling? Is it simply the students' natures or is it what happens to them, for them, or even with them that makes for a survivable, successful school experience?"

The students are all so different. Teachers and carers come to recognise the differences readily, as do parents. My gleanings of behaviour management theory had also shown me that we are different people with different people. Nevertheless, those students I taught with MID measures of cognitive performance seemed to have some pervasive intra-group similarities, such as in very slow rates of learning alongside glaring social and life-skills deficits.

The hunch I had after considering the diversity of contributing variables was that one 'solution' to MID students' school failure would appear to lie in curriculum. A curricular approach could arguably furnish a less evasive solution than one which attempted to address a broad range of human, interactive teaching and learning variables. The results of a study focussing on content and outcomes might be generalised more than could individual teachers' styles or the endless variety found in

school climates and cultures. From my observations then, and in the view of my close colleagues, the greatest poverty in the education for the MID population seemed to lie not in teachers' levels of concern, nor in the human environment of peer and community, but in the actual planned (and underplanned) 'work' at the heart of the classroom and broader learning program.

In the Latin of the Roman Colosseum and Circus, curriculum meant both the chariot *and* the courseway. It is a journey, but not without a means and a purpose. As it pertains to students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities, we are still considerably short of the mark in understanding both the means and ends of curriculum. For this reason the study is given the title: *A Way to Go.*

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Background of the research problem

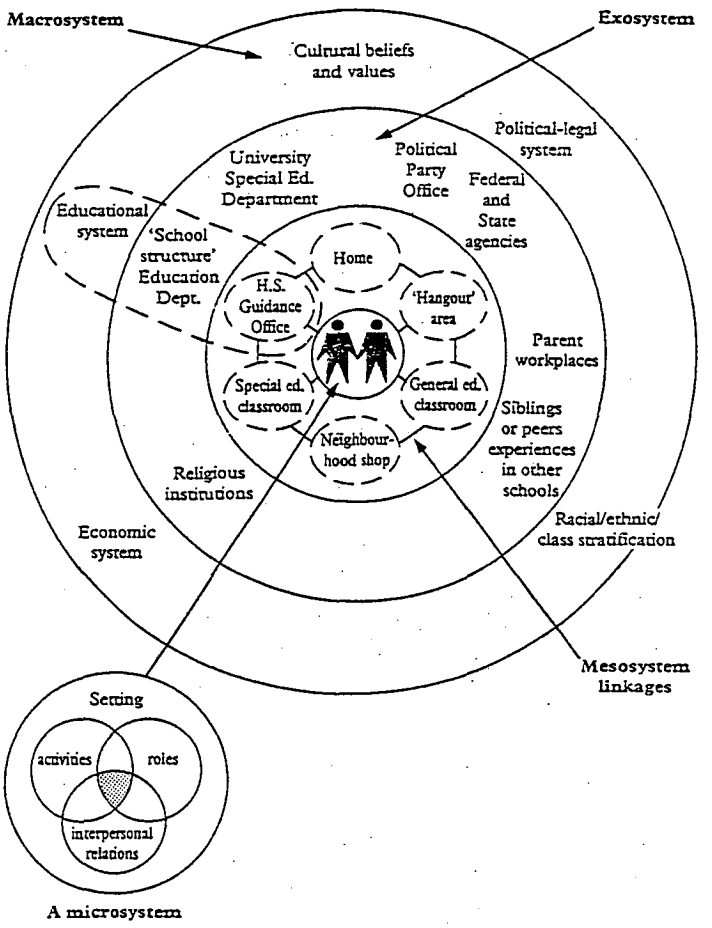
When an educator establishes curriculum as the major focus of attention in a school's provision for its students, learning assumes its place as the root endeavour of education. Students with disabilities are among those whose greatest needs are often identified as being in pursuits other than learning. The focus of students' programs is too often upon services which contribute to their maintenance within a system not well geared to their pace or style of learning. Teachers and administrators know only too well how difficult it is for a system of diminishing resources to attend adequately to both the learning and the social adjustment needs of minority populations.

The students at the centre of the study are described as having Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID). They have been identified within the range of IQ 55-69 on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised (WISC-R). The IQ descriptor has been accepted for the study primarily because its use is maintained in the Tasmanian context as a key criterion for support service eligibility. There are many factors associated with Mild Intellectual Disability other than cognitive performance. These are explored later in this chapter and within the review of literature in the chapter following. Six students in particular have been targeted to ground the study in 'real', relatable experiences and to give common points of reference throughout to the study's respondents.

The purpose of the study was, primarily, to ascertain the curriculum needs of young adolescent students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID). Because the needs of any person or group are relative to different contexts, an ecological perspective has been adopted as the best reflection of the influences and conditions within which any student must operate. The temptation to limit data gathered to those from one group of stakeholders, in particular to the students themselves, was rejected in favour of Bronfenbrener's (1979) ecosystem model.

The concept has been mapped by Ogbu (1981) and is shown here (Fig. 1.1) as adapted by Murray-Seegert (1993, p. 39):

Figure 1.1 Model of the human ecosystem (after Bronfenbrenner, 1979)



In his model, Bronfenbrenner proposed an interactive continuum of influences which could not be isolated realistically from each other in any analysis of factors influencing human development, be it educational, physical or in any other dimension.

The sources of data by which appropriate curriculum has been explored in this study were stakeholders in MID students' education, including the six vignetted students. "Stakeholders" are, in terms of this study, persons with either a direct interest (an investment of time or money) or influence in the curriculum of the target MID students.

Upon this foundation, the study has attempted to explore the characteristics of a curriculum which might be 'appropriate' in meeting the needs of MID adolescents. Because the majority of implications to be drawn from the study are for parents, teachers

and educational administrators, those particular stakeholders might be considered the 'intended' audience.

At the conclusion of the thesis, several criteria are proposed, by which educators and other stakeholders might evaluate the appropriateness of any curricular provisions intended for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. If the results and implications lead to the designing and delivery of improved curriculum options for MID students, the study will have achieved its purpose.

The stakeholders consulted within this study range from the distal groups such as *administrators*, through *employers* and local *taxpayers* (whose taxes support public education and whose votes influence at least the intentions of policy makers) through *community agents* or caregivers to the more proximal stakeholders of *teachers*, *able peers*, and the most proximal in *parents* and *MID students* themselves. Consideration is given at each phase of the research to the relative influence of distal through to proximal influences.

Stakeholders' reflections, preferences and recommendations are the guiding bases for the arguments advanced in the thesis. The line of inquiry is presented throughout against the background of policy, theory and field research. These notions are informed by data on schools' curriculum practices involving students with disabilities.

Context of the study

The contextual focus for the study is Tasmania, more specifically the two School Districts of Forester and Macquarie in the North East of the state. The six students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities who are at the topical centre of the research are adolescents who have had school experiences argued to be representative of others within the identified cohort of MID students in Tasmania. From the students' 'microsystem' outward, stakeholders and curriculum dynamics (such as intentions, negotiation, programs, assessment, reporting and certification) are viewed through the school and community contexts of the actual students. Each level of the ecosystem is addressed for its contribution. Even where generalised or hypothetical preferences are solicited, the sources of those reflections are the actual players in the MID students' human ecologies, including, among others, their parents, their teachers, carers, peers and administrative policy makers.

Terms used in the thesis

The first few paragraphs of the thesis are sufficiently dense with the technical language of education and psychology to warrant establishing working definitions of terms and phrases used in the report.

Some of the terms and phrases are context-bound; some are attributed to scholars who coined them; most, however, are arguably 'common' usages likely to find acceptance among the majority of educators across state and national boundaries.

academic skills: represent the knowledge and abilities which stem from the basics of literacy and numeracy in so far as they provide access to the more specialised content of all learning areas, such as science, the arts, languages or technology. They include reading for information and cultural stimulus, writing in different genres, calculating beyond daily numerical tasks and describing spatial relationships. They also relate to the use of technology for communicating and computing such as keyboard and calculator. In high schools these skills are usually dealt with via "core curriculum" subjects.

adaptive behaviour: the ability to cope with independent living in a socially acceptable way.

administrator: a person whose main role, within the terms of this thesis, is the management of an educational enterprise, rather than the face-to-face teaching of a curriculum.

at-risk: likely to leave school prior to the end of compulsory schooling or to complete schooling with no tangible outcomes; potentially alienated from the educative process.

core curriculum: the compulsory or required subjects and learning areas offered to all students within the broader curriculum. See Skilbeck (1982), p.21.

course: an arranged or prepared sequence of learning content and activities offered within a finite timeline.

curriculum/s, curricula: the overt learning program and/or collection of courses undertaken by learners enrolled at a school. In this thesis it is taken to comprise the intended outcomes and expressed content of learning activities planned, offered and delivered to students.

curriculum needs: this phrase is used to describe the combined meanings of
(i) the conditions 'deemed' by others to be essential to the learner for the achievement of the intended outcomes from curricular activities;
(ii) the learner's self-expressed requirements from his or her curricular involvement; and
(iii) provisions which are individually or mutually perceived as lacking in a student's or group of students' curriculum.

curricular outcome: a skill, tangible product or discernible attitude resulting from a learning program or curriculum.

curriculum content: activities and described focal skills, attitudes or knowledge presented within a lesson, course or program.

curriculum differentiation: to plan and deliver selected or modified curriculum content, activity and outcomes to certain individuals or groups within the one population of learners, with priorities according to learners' needs for later life.

disability: *any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being"*(World Health Organisation definition quoted by Ashman & Elkins [1990]). While it is acknowledged that a correct description of a person's ability or disability should have the person first, as in "a student with a mild intellectual disability", there are occasions in the thesis where the initials 'MID' are used. Without wishing to offend persons concerned or their advocates, the use of such phrases as *students with MID* and *MID students* is simply to lessen the repetition of longhand 'correct' references.

distal stakeholder: one essentially operating outside the immediate, day-to-day, interactive environment of a learner. An educational administrator at policy-making level would be deemed a distal stakeholder for the study's purposes.

ecological: incorporating multiple, interactive factors which reflect the notions that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and that isolated perspectives are incomplete and potentially erroneous in failing to account for the interaction of all levels in the human ecosystem surrounding any individual or group (after Bronfenbrenner, 1976, 1979; and Schumacher, 1973).

handicapped: the term is one which is infrequently but deliberately used within the thesis to denote the social and, in this context, educational disadvantages which may result from an unaccommodated disability. Where the term has been used as quotation, no rewording has been attempted.

inclusion (inclusive): the practice of maintaining students of all abilities within the regular classroom programs of a regular school.

integration: the process of returning or placing students with disabilities from special school into regular school. This may or may not mean inclusion in the mainstream of every class or subject.

life skills: those abilities which give all people the capacity to live with optimal independence, such as in keeping house, maintaining personal hygiene, managing money go shopping, catching a bus, using a phone and engaging in satisfying leisure pursuits. Life Skills literacy is the ability to recognise signs for safety and facilities access (e.g. toilets, post office). Life Skills numeracy indicates such abilities as counting to twenty and using a calendar adequately.

mainfare: the curriculum normally timetabled for unrestricted, on-campus access; the courses/subjects most often compulsory at early secondary level.

mainstream: the regular classroom setting within regular (and usually) neighbourhood schools.

pedagogy: teaching technique or philosophical approach to teaching and learning.

pre-vocational skills: those abilities which allow the employment of a person on a day-to day basis, such as punctuality, staying on task, appropriate dress,

accepting criticism, taking turns, keeping sequence and signalling anomalies or problems.

program: arranged or negotiated sequence of learning events.

proximal stakeholder: an interest-bearer or influence within the learner's immediate, day-to-day, interactive environment, e.g., parents and class teachers.

Records of Achievement (ROA): personal folios of curricular and extra-curricular records, containing e.g., first aid certificates, photographs of constructions or art, work samples, references or commendations. They serve in some schools as 'evidence' to augment the school reporting process.

regular school: a school of a state or private system which enrols and teaches students representative of the broad population's ability range. It may or may not happen to have students with disabilities enrolled and it may or may not have an actively inclusive (see above) educational policy.

social skills: those skills which denote quality of relationships and social interactions: assertiveness, building and maintaining friendships , appropriate communication and situational responses, impulse control (over temper or excitement), absence of distractive habits and acceptable expressions of affection and sexuality.

special school: a school with its own campus and staff who are teaching only students enrolled with disabilities or learning difficulties.

stakeholder/s: denotes a person (or group) with either a direct interest (an investment of time or money) or an influence in the education of a certain person or group of persons (in this case, of MID students).

student enterprise: group exercises in market research, product/service design, production and accounting usually cross-curricular, sometimes within Work and Daily Living or Life Skills courses.

subject: curricular unit or learning area taught as a discrete discipline or sub discipline.

taxpayer: the most distal of stakeholders in education, the "person-in-the-street" who may or may not have direct contact with students of whatever ability.

teacher's aide: while the term *teacher assistant* is assuming greater currency, *aide* is the most commonly used term to denote a paid ancillary who contributes to the teaching program of a school.

'the' curriculum: is taken to mean the courses of study generally recognised as undertaken by the majority of both public and private school children at any particular stage or age.

work experience: participation in and observation of workplace roles in the context of actual workplaces; offered to Grade 10 as a 'mainfare' expectation and to Grades 11 and 12 as Work Placement courses which are credit-transferable elements of the Australian Vocational Training System.

Focus on curriculum

The stimulus to the study has been the perceived school failure of students in whose interests the historically recognised school curriculum was not designed. Although policy has acknowledged the predominant curriculum has shortcomings with regard to disadvantaged students' needs (MCEETYA, 1994; Department of Education & the Arts, Tasmania, 1987), the research reported here has tried to provide data which will help take that acknowledgment closer to the actual redesigning and provision of appropriate curriculum for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID), albeit within a climate of relatively stringent resources. Cost effectiveness must, however, *follow* the needs brief, if vision is not to be dimmed ahead of design and implementation.

What is explored in the study is the shape and makeup of a curriculum which educators and other stakeholders might agree upon as having content and outcomes that are most needed by MID adolescents, particularly in the practical context of students' inclusion in regular secondary schools.

Many schools have responded to the inclusion of students with disabilities by attempting to support their full participation in an unstreamed mainfare of courses, subjects, units and lessons. This non-special type of provision creates less 'diversification and expansion' of the curriculum and hence less pressure on overall pupil/teacher ratios than alternative, individualised options. Curriculum differentiation, especially when offered in separate or special settings with higher teacher/pupil ratios, is argued by some to be more expensive and less equitable than education of disabled persons in the mainstream (Fulcher, 1990; Lipsky & Gartner, 1989). Others maintain that equality of opportunity depends, for some students, upon access to alternative content, experiences and timelines, and that equitable participation is not a function of the mainstream context alone (Kauffman & Pullen, 1989; Wilton, 1993). Resolution of the conundrum of cost-effective individualisation might be expected to lie, not in expansion of the curriculum, but in the access and choice available to students.

The processes used in a one-curriculum-for-all approach rely upon the social capacities of integrated or inclusively maintained special needs students. They must manage any frustration and inadequacy that results from contending with courses designed for peers who are more developmentally matched to the 'normal' conceptual stages implicit in the curriculum. Those more academically or socially capable peers are, for their part, required to develop patience with regard to disabled classmates, along with altruism which is at times beyond what is expected in our culture of extended childhood, individualism and competitive futures orientations. Under such

conditions, socialisation for both disabled and non-disabled students is potentially a conflict-plagued process. Debate surfaces frequently at all levels (of media, school council roundtables, staffrooms and journals) concerning the affective gains to able peers on one hand, and, on the other, potential loss of fair academic attention from total inclusion. Socially 'correct' attitudes are brought into contention with personal demands of the academic and pre-vocational curriculum, along with related expectations or approval.

Disabled adolescents are likely to have simultaneous rites of passage occurring: from the more secure, 'mothering' primary school climate to a more masculine, competitive secondary environment; from biological pre-adolescence to puberty; from special to regular settings; and from family-defined norms to peer-referenced identity. As with most adolescents, the concerns in such transitions are inherently social, rather than academic (Cormack, 1991).

The *hidden* curriculum, which once might have been assumed to either support or undermine the social preconditions for heterogeneity in school and class, is emerging to the foreground of curriculum. Social and life skills are not able to be left to subliminal development. The study has probed the notion that such skills are sufficiently important to warrant greater, more explicit space in 'the' curriculum's content and intended outcomes.

A focus on upon curriculum, as it pertains to subgroups within our student populations, raises questions of 'appropriateness' to contemporary, immediate and relevant 'needs', because, almost by definition, subgroups' needs cannot be defined by inherited presumptions. However, the notion of appropriateness does not only relate to students identified as disadvantaged through race, distance or condition. Every parent of a school-age child will have thought about the match of school programs to their child's particular capacities and interests. As a child approaches maturity and independence, the matching of an educative process to the learner becomes more complex. Not only must the nature of child and program be in harmony, but the future aspirations and 'competencies' developed in the students demand to be articulated to realistic further education or employment opportunities.

Curriculum is the most controllable variable operating in this process. Schools only indirectly and slowly affect the social environments of their context. It is in curriculum that the opportunities given to students by school systems are most explicitly expressed. In the study, curriculum is confined (within the bounds of realism) to the intended *content* and *outcomes* of learning provisions. While there is no intention to assume too

false a division in education of subject matter, teaching, evaluation, learning and assessment, for the purposes of the report, curriculum's *whats* and *what fors* (content and outcomes) are presented ahead of the *hows* (in the sense of teaching technique).

Curriculum most clearly provides elements which are manipulable; capable of being planned, negotiated, assessed and reported. Content can be controlled and intended outcomes can be at least published. The vagaries of context, while crucial to the planning, are essentially uncontrollable variables, and must be *reacted to* by curriculum design, rather than *pre-empted.* Included in the less controllable variables are many key proximal factors such as teachers' attitudes, and idiosyncratic teaching styles, peer acceptance of others' differences and parental values. While it can be contended that variables resistant to manipulation are no less important than curricular 'controllables', the present study is intent upon describing what might be most effectively promoted and offered, as a matter of consensus, by those with influence upon students' learning programs.

The students at the centre of the study

Despite the limitations of any proposed continuum of intellectual abilities within definitional categories, teachers and support service personnel recognise the common or shared school experiences of those in their caseloads classified as students with 'Mild Intellectual Disabilities' (MID). Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities are described by Ashman and Elkins (1994) as those who are, on the basis of standardised intelligence tests such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Revised) significantly below normal, or more than two standard deviations below the norm. The measure ranges between I.Q. 55 and I.Q. 69. Only 2.14 percent of the population are statistically reckoned to fall within the range. Collected incidence figures, however, vary greatly. The most comprehensive Australian prevalence study, by Ashby, Robinson & Taylor (1988), estimated that Tasmania would have 2989 school-age persons with severe to mild intellectual disability (ranging IQ 25-70). Of these, 2817 or 94.2 percent could be expected to be in the MID range. Similar percentages were presented for other states.

The charted profile of an MID student's achievement on the Wechsler (WISC-R) test items will typically show generalised delay, across both the verbal and performance scores. While many differences will exist among MID students in terms of socialisation or adaptive behaviour (Mercer et al, 1986; Sparrow, Balla & Cicchetti, 1984) and multiple intelligences or abilities (Gardner, 1983), students with Mild

Intellectual Disabilities can be identified in terms of school performance as a cohort with predictable learning characteristics and related academic performances that distinguish them from the normal curve's hypothetically 'average' child.

The relationship of academic failure to cognitive performance is historically self-evident. Though not all failing students are disabled, the predicability of failure for intellectually disabled students in an unmodified curriculum is equally self-evident. The original "intelligence test" devised by Binet in 1904 was commissioned by the French government to help it predict and sort out likely school failures from those who would most profit from the nation's then scarce academic provisions (Binet & Simon, 1905.)

Few teachers called upon to manage intellectually disabled students are able to interpret Guidance Officers' psychometric assessments (using such instruments as the WISC-R) in their curriculum planning for MID and other students, including those with discernible Specific Learning Disabilities (Ashman & Elkins, 1994). The most common function of psychological assessment in Tasmania has been to establish claims for special funding or programming, extra in-school support or special school placement. North American research has suggested that referral for assessment in the US context can also signal a desire by the teacher to be exonerated of the responsibility to sustain the educational provisions for high needs students (Semmel, 1987).

As the largest group of disabled persons in our schools, MID students generate a commonality of learning 'characteristics' which accords them recognisability and, to a certain extent, justifies some anticipation of their curricular needs on the part of staff responsible for program planning. Their successful engagement with the main curriculum of high schools is more often than not problematic. Alternatives might or might not exist for them, depending on the particular school, its resources (staff and materials) and its approach to disadvantaged groups. Little is planned system-wide specifically for such students, partly because of the philosophy behind inclusive schooling which proposes that differentiation implies or even promotes separation and hence inequity. Students integrated with moderate or more severe intellectual disabilities are not, however, as likely to be caught in the sameness /difference impasse to the extent experienced by MID students. The more obvious intellectual disabilities tend to be accompanied by clearer physical indicators of syndromes such as Down Syndrome and Fragile X, or by immediately recognisable social non-conformities. Teachers' and administrators' fears of inequitable underexpectation are not stimulated by students with more severe disabilities; life skills programs are 'expected' for them as a justification for their involvement in formal schooling.

This thesis is in part an investigation of the notion of curriculum differentiation and its appropriateness for certain groups within our schools. The very presence of alternative curricula can be a point of heated contention. Some writers who hold to an uncompromising 'total inclusion' position have claimed that differentiated and alternative curricular provisions indicate division and failure of systems to unify the plural branches of mainstream and special education (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989). The study attempts to probe stakeholders' responses to the notion that equity and pluralism in curriculum are incompatible.

MID students, though a group of persons with considerably divergent backgrounds, capacities and skills, commonly present as failed or 'at-risk' learners, peer-rejected and lost in the regular curriculum. A high drop-out rate for MID students in the Forester School District under consideration is exacerbated by the legal capacity of disabled students to gain exemptions from compulsory schooling at age fifteen years. Loneliness and scapegoating, absenteeism and truancy, frustration-driven acting out and withdrawal from class are the affective and behavioural consequences of being intellectually disabled in a regular school program not tailored to one's learning characteristics. By far the most common source of classroom frustration in MID students is the inability to make use of the materials which introduce the concepts and tasks of school lessons. At Grade 7, MID students are *rarely within four years* of the measured reading ability of their regular peers. The relationship between low cognitive ability and literacy limitations has been established for some decades. Bond & Tinker (1973) produced data from broad studies to show students of fifteen years of age with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (a Stanford Binet IQ score of 70) had an expected "reading grade" of 4.8 (or the equivalent of regular peers at 10 years of age).

A *print-based* delivery of the compulsory academic curriculum or of any curricular adaptation, is a predictably stressful stumbling block for youths with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. In Tasmania all Grade 7 and 8 students undertake a common curriculum across the available learning areas. At this early high school stage, courses tailored to slower learners are not generally available, nor are the materials to support them, whereas reasonable numbers of modified courses are available within the TCE syllabus range for Grade 9 on.

Relative immaturity of conceptual development combines with poor short term memory to create comprehension difficulties for students with cognitive delays. More than motivation and effort is required from MID students in order to achieve 'success'. Repetition, purpose-built materials, concrete experiences and careful feedback are

minimum strategies for effective learning. The term 'slow learners', while pejorative in some ways, reflects the most obvious problem for both a learner with Mild Intellectual Disabilities and the teacher/s.

Although the retention of MID students within regular learning contexts can break down at any age or stage, there appear to be transition points at which MID students have the greatest difficulty in achieving success. In terms of continued inclusion, sustained learning (though not necessarily age-commensurate) and social accommodation at a teacher and peer level, shifts from early childhood to primary style programs and from upper primary to secondary programs appear to pose the greatest difficulties for slower or more delayed learners. School refusals, truancies and suspensions occur most frequently following students' transitional stages. These stages are ventured for investigation in the thesis to assess their predictability as 'problem-times' for inclusion or integration.

The tension surrounding the curricular 'hows' and 'whats' of MID students' schooling, in pursuit of an appropriate match of provision to needs, is indicative of a broad and intensifying competition for curriculum time that is occurring. The phenomenon is expressed in staffroom phrases such as the crowded curriculum and curriculum overload (Burke & Taylor, 1990; Newell, 1989). School retention rates and inclusive practices are adding urgency to the notion of determining and meeting curriculum needs. School systems are responding by offering many short courses (e.g., the Tasmanian Certificate of Education's [TCE] 25 hour syllabus structure) at a high school level to meet the dual objectives of student interest and ostensible non-streaming of abilities. Added to this burgeoning is the introduction of mandatory curriculum at a state level such as *Health* in Tasmania and the *Chance and Data* strand of Mathematics at a national level through the nationally collaborated Statements and Profiles (Curriculum Corporation, 1994a; 1994b). The cross-currents of individual needs and common social purpose are clear, though the direction of the resultant impetus is not.

Questioning the term 'appropriate'

Appropriateness can be viewed ecologically (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to account for the influence and interests of an interdependent community which will include, among others, employers, carers, peers and guardians. Despite the mutual needs and complementary resources of the community, each interaction and transaction has its unique demands and nature. What may be appropriate in one context may be inappropriate in another. In the sense of mutuality, curriculum is called upon to be all things to all people and in the sense of 'unique' relations, to be flexible and sensitive to

particular needs and circumstances. Bronfenbrenner's resolution of this potential conflict of interests is to attach greatest importance to proximal factors, and progressively less to distal factors. This makes sense of the policy-level administrators' influence over macro issues such as recommended common learnings, while daily contact influences shape provisions to meet students' needs in localised ways.

School level leaders, teachers and support services are caught amid ecological layers of influences. They must interpret policy received seemingly from above and beyond to make such macro-policy realistic and relevant, while satisfying the needs and demands of child, parent and an array of proximal stakeholders within their daily contact. Teachers in particular bear responsibility for the outcomes of resource and curriculum decisions which school leaders make (collaboratively perhaps). Time and money are rationalised in different, but consequential, ways by each level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological sociometry (Murray-Seegert, 1993). Tasmania's *Equity in Schooling* policy (DEA, Tasmania, 1995) conceives of social justice as being best achieved through a positive redistribution of resources to those with the greatest educational disadvantage.

Were a sponsoring State or Commonwealth body to commission the design of an 'appropriate curriculum' for young adolescent MID students within the context of an inclusive schooling system, one might expect the design brief to satisfy three conditions. First, the design must be logistically (including economically) sustainable. Second, the design must accord with perennial (i.e., not politically or fashionably susceptible) values. Thirdly, it must serve the practical ends of the focal subjects (MID students) in the contexts of their daily lives. The task of describing criteria by which the curriculum of any learner might be deemed appropriate is a conundrum. The variables are many and are in constant flux: students' physical, social and cognitive development; socialisation dynamics including the entrenchment and breaking free of structural patterns such as disability, class and education levels; school 'mission statements' and systemic objectives; social contexts including peer cultures; and geographic circumstances with service access and work opportunity implications, which both drive and reflect school and training programs.

It would be narrow-sighted to ignore that schools already operate under the belief that their curriculums are appropriate. In the literature of curriculum and special needs the term 'appropriate' is used with a plethora of connotations. Examples might include: politically correct; developmentally or age-matched; timely; suitable to the occasion or context; culturally inoffensive; effective and well-chosen. It is (mis)taken as understood that the term is criterial to goodness or effectiveness, in whatever context it

is used. Yet it is seldom challenged as a notion which demands scrutiny. It is a qualifying term used in a very unqualified way by many who would galvanise its endorsing power to their ends. An Australian special education researcher, Fulcher (1990), in a diatribe against the self-serving looseness of terms in the area of special education, noted that the word *appropriate* makes a frequent appearance: "this is the vocabulary these actors deploy to make their claim to expertise, to special knowledge about this area" (p.352).

The following examples of uses of the term in curriculum and research documents show its pervasive and essentially unspecified use (the number of collected examples has been reduced from 30 plus to eight):

> *appropriate attitudes, capabilities and skills,* Education Department, Tasmania (1983, p. 42);
>
> *the basic right of access to appropriate education for disabled children,* Commonwealth Schools Commission, (1985a, p. 109);
>
> *designed appropriate individualised programs*, Education Department, Tasmania (1988, p. 3);
>
> *appropriate career education,* AEC (1989) The Hobart Declaration;
>
> *shortage of appropriate programs*, Finn (1992, p. 143);
>
> *appropriate learning opportunities*, Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania (1993, p. 10);
>
> *appropriate and continuing support,* NBEET (1993a, p. 44);
>
> *appropriately supported; appropriate structuring of the learning environment* and *appropriate intervention,* Wiltshire, (1994, p. 157, 158 and 164, respectively).

An uncommonly explicit use of the term *appropriate* found within the literature is Power's (1981) statement, quoted by a later reviewer of the English system, Copeland (1990):

> I suggest we need a ... curriculum based on the principles of appropriateness of the learners' age and developmental level to the social settings in which they live and to their view of and needs within that setting...I am calling for a curriculum that is 'ecologically valid', that is, relevant and true to the children's lives within their own social milieux. (p.10)

It is a sobering comment on progress in the field of special education that no specific working definition of *appropriateness* in policy or practice has been generated either in the UK or among scholars and practitioners of other English-speaking nations. In theorising the criteria by which appropriateness of curriculum might be evaluated,

agreement concerning a curriculum's purposes across stakeholder groups has been probed by this study. Though Power was calling for an "ecologically valid" curriculum in 1981, very little has since been achieved towards establishing such a curriculum approach.

With explicit statements from governments and education systems that schooling and productive citizenship are linked inextricably and purposefully, the community-referencing of curriculum is a logical consequence (Hughes, 1993). Appropriateness must account for influences which, while proximal to students, operate largely outside the control of schools. These influences include such stakeholders as caregivers, recreation providers, employers, extended families and peers. Their participation in the process of designing and enacting curriculum can only benefit those who Elkind (1983, cited in van Kraayenoord & Elkins, 1994, p. 261) described as "curriculum disabled" (in the sense of being handicapped by the curriculum). The articulation and sense-making of any student's progress within a community matrix is what Bronfenbrenner (1979) identified as an ecological social function that is too often overlooked *.

Rationale for conducting the study

The extent to which individualisation of curriculum is both needed and possible is a question which impresses itself upon classroom teachers and other program providers. The task of tailoring courses and programs to individual differences or even to cohorts within larger populations poses formidable time-and-motion problems for schools and individual teachers. This research has, as one of its broad aims, to provide grounds for the balancing of individual and societal emphases in curriculum. Teachers will, it is intended, be able to use the results to shape their practice in accord with an ethical and functional base. Derived ecologically, such an information base might reduce the risk of teachers' planning being subject to 'tunnel vision' and might increase the generalisation and transfer of essential or needed student skills.

It is anticipated that a similar contribution can be made by the study to the work of systemic-level course designers as they go beyond individualisation in planning. The

*A member of the Department of Education and the Arts (Tasmania) Committee which reviews research proposals involving public schools returned a comment to me, questioning the logic of going to a broad source base for my data. The member wrote "If you want to find out the needs of Mildly Intellectually Disabled students, why not just ask them?" I was , by conscience, forced to ignore the suggestion for its failure to understand the level of self-management and self-perception one can expect of youths with significant intellectual disabilities. I did, of course, directly consult the MID students through interviews, but their incomplete understanding (to be expected of *any* adolescent) is balanced against the perspectives of others by whom students must inevitably be influenced in a human ecosystem.

research should help curriculum designers assess the relevance of curriculum initiatives to MID persons. The gauntlet run by curriculum developers between equity and instrumentalism in education requires a knowledge of client group requirements. Skilbeck (1980), early in the Australian explication of the 'core curriculum' concept, recognised that

> core thinking relates well to certain aspects of mainstreaming but like that movement it must be accompanied by fine-grained, school-focussed development if it is to serve as a useful addition to our educational repertoire...we must demonstrate that in curriculum design and provisions we have the capability to meet the educational needs of children for which, in the past, various kinds of separate provisions have been deemed essential. (p.20)

A challenge has been laid down by Rieth (1990) who called for "studies exploring alternative differential curricula and field placement strategies in vocational educational settings" for midly disabled students (p. 16). Rieth recommended a two-level research agenda for curriculum with MID students in secondary school programs. The first would involve descriptive research. He saw the outcome of such research being

> to increase the fund of knowledge about this population, their behaviour, their curriculum, their teachers' behaviour, instructional strategies employed, the general ecology, the opportunities to respond and home-school co-operation ... (with further) intervention research on teaching and curricular strategies to help acquisition and transfer of academic and social skills to reduce course failures and increase employment outcomes. (p.9)

Rieth's second level is beyond the scope of the present study, but it is an intended follow-on from this research. Rieth called for "in-depth five-year comprehensive projects on academic, social and vocational interventions aimed at accelerating the rates of the above outcomes (which) would include impact evaluations" (p.10).

The research reported here addresses the academic, social and vocational domains advanced by Rieth. Life skills, embracing the more functional independence of students, have been added as a fourth domain. The potential complexity of the research task is obvious. It involved: several curriculum skill domains; multiple stakeholders; shifts over time and schooling context; all viewed within a multi-method research. An effort has consequently been made to adhere to the "Law of Parsimony". Borrowed from the realm of natural sciences, this is: *the principle that no more causes should be assumed than will account for the effect* (Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1965).

Structure and layout of the thesis

The thesis has been set out in five chapters, including the present chapter, the *Introduction.*

Chapter Two, the *Literature Review*, presents the conceptual background to the study, surveying first the literature of theory and policy as it affects and reflects issues of curriculum and disability-related equity. It then examines the published research. The scope of the literature is progressively drawn in, on a geographical level, to Tasmania. At a human development level, the reading narrows its focus from broad student populations towards young adolescents, specifically those with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. The research questions for the study are then stated as an outcome of the contextual considerations of the previous chapter in the light of research, policy and theory expressed in the literature.

Chapter Three, *Methodology*, first sets out reasons for the choice of research methods and the instruments used in the study. The chapter then describes procedures undertaken within the multi-method approach. The research techniques employed are described in sufficient detail for both critical analysis and context-referenced replication. Then follows a description of the data analysis processes projected for each method. The chapter concludes with a statement of the study's endeavours towards reliability, validity and applicability.

The *Results* of the data-gathering procedures are presented in Chapter Four. The four major research questions are addressed, with data reported as they pertain directly to each question. The results of two questionnaires, several sets of interviews and quantified data related to the interviews are presented in twenty one tables. Each data gathering method has applicability, in part, to each of the research questions. The chapter responds to those questions according to the strengths and meaning of the data but leaves the implications of its findings to the following chapter.

Chapter Five, the *Discussion* considers the study's results for their implications for theory and practice. The chapter evaluates the methodological framework of the study, particularly the ecological balance and impact of proximal and distal influences. Upon this comparison of viewpoints, triangulation of several findings is argued. Recommendations are made particularly for educators at school and professional development levels, but also for the several stakeholder groups. The *Discussion* extrapolates the study's findings as a set of nine criteria by which teachers and other

stakeholders might critically assess the 'appropriateness' of a school's curriculum provisions for students who have Mild Intellectual Disabilities.

Chapter Six offers a *Conclusion* to the study. In this brief final chapter, limitations to the research findings are considered, along with recommendations for further research that might ensue from or complement the study.

The thesis is accompanied by a reference section comprising: the *Appendices* which carry the research instruments used, tables of results too lengthy for body of the text and relevant procedural communications; and the *References* for works cited.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Curriculum for adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID) should be viewed in the context of the curriculum which is available to all students. Such a perspective has been underscored in the current decade by curriculum policy and research in Australia to make the curriculum pertinent and accessible to disadvantaged persons (Andrews, 1991; Elkins, 1987, 1992; Finn, 1991).

The review will first address the ideas, policy and practices which have shaped 'the' curriculum in the last half of this century. Consideration is given throughout to the curriculum's response to disadvantaged persons, in particular disabled students, and to literature reflecting upon their inclusion into the main (though variable) fabric of general schooling.

To bring a global perspective to the Australian curriculum position, especially to that of Tasmania, overseas policy, theories and studies are reported for their influence and applicability to this study's major research questions. Most of the overseas literature emanates from the United States and the United Kingdom (see for example, Brennan 1985; Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage & Jaben, 1985). This reflects the significant impact made by these educational systems on Australian policy and practice. Scandanavians and other Europeans have had an indirect influence only, with the 'normalisation' concepts of Bank-Mikkelsen (1969) and Nirje (1970) having been vigorously interpreted to the US by Wolfensberger (1972). Exceptions to the 'north-Atlantic' influences in the literature include Freire's (1972) South American advocacy of grass-roots controlled, learner-centred curriculum, and the New Zealand work of Wilton and others (Wilton, 1993; Wilton, Cooper & Glynn, 1987) in its focus on the referral and placement of MID students.

The area of curriculum, as it pertains to people with intellectual disabilities, is vast. Despite the pragmatic acknowledgment by the World Health Organisation and national systems throughout the world of MID students as a delineable or discrete cohort, the nature of human complexity makes such an artificial creation of 'exclusive' ability subsets illogical. No sustainable case has been mounted in research for cutting off the delivery of one curriculum provision to students purely on the grounds of categorical ineligibility. A logical continuum of abilities suggests a necessary blurring of the lines between provisions for one described or categorised group and another. Resourcing policy appears informed as much by scales of economy and eligibility for scarce resources as it is by the logical seamlessness of curriculum 'need'.

Teachers discover that among several sub-groups of disadvantaged students and those with unmet educational needs, many are found to require similar programs to students defined as in the MID range by psychometric and adaptive measures. This overlapping of programs aimed to match variations in school performance gives a necessarily expanded scope to the reading. It must incorporate studies and policies directed at a wide spread of 'allied' social and individual circumstances such as more severe disability categories, less severe learning difficulties, socially defined disadvantage, at-riskedness and school failure.

A further widening of the scope results from the developmental range covered by MID students of a middle school age. The problems posed for schooling by the breadth of physical and psycho-social conditions in young adolescence have been reported thoroughly by Cormack (1991) for the Australian context. Hence the transitions from primary to high school, segregated to regular, childhood to young adulthood, school to community and workplace, all emerge as issues in literature concerning curriculum undertaken by adolescent MID students.

In order to give clearer direction to the reading, an approach is taken in the review similar the 'ecological' rationale advanced earlier for the study itself. Beginning from a distal perspective, at a cultural, political and systemic level, the literature is drawn in through layers of human ecosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986. See Fig. 1.1) toward proximal factors such as student curriculum choicemaking, school/ community and school/workplace interactions.

To facilitate a clearer orientation to the field under consideration, the Literature Review is presented in the following sections:

Overview

The general curriculum

- Post-war notions of curriculum purpose
- Core curriculum
- Curriculum for all

Curriculum reform in Australia

- Participation and equity in Australian curriculum
- Designing access to curriculum

Alternative curriculum models and practices

- Special needs curriculum differentiation and individualisation
- Functional curriculum
- Australian curriculum research and policy

Curriculum for MID adolescents

- Transition as a curriculum orientation for MID students
- Teacher skills for curriculum deliberation

Tasmanian provisions in context

- Tasmania's approach to special educational needs
- School curriculum for special needs in Tasmania

Curriculum domains

Research questions

Overview

Holly (1973) characterised the central issue in curriculum conceptualisation as the tension between personal and public purposes of education. Such purposes are equally shared by students with disabilities. Skilbeck (1982) postulated a core curriculum which might resolve some of that tension in removing the dichotomy of academic versus vocational education. By establishing essential common learnings, instruction rather than content was forwarded as the key curriculum variable. Brennan (1985) argued that appropriateness of curriculum depends upon a balance of functional (i.e. generic- basic) and contextual (i.e. situation-specific) elements. Neither is dependent on regular or self-contained settings.

The growth of a National Curriculum in the UK, out of the core curriculum concept

(Skilbeck, 1982), has resulted in an 'individualising' of the main curriculum (Hammond & Read, 1992). A social justice focus in the US has given curriculum differentiation a place through individual education plans or IEPs (Rothstein, 1990; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1990). The flexibility to adjust curriculum towards a social-occupational emphasis has been argued by Semmel (1987) as a right for those with mild disabilities. Clark (1994) and Brolin (1991) have established community-referenced curriculum as a normalisation process more beneficial to transition than a unitary academic-cored curriculum. As the process of transition becomes better understood through work such as that of Parmenter (1990; 1994b), Riches (1992) and Richardson (1993a,b), curricular domain adjustments can be argued. Green (1993) reasons that such transitional measures must begin early enough for slow learners to achieve optimal outcomes rather than mere participation from their school experiences.

The general curriculum

Post-war notions of curriculum purpose

Stenhouse, (1967) and Holly (1973) were at the forefront of early challenges to academic orientations of curriculum purpose. While Stenhouse (1970) argued for an educational liberalism in which a place for Humanities could democratise esoteric sciences and classics, Holly (1973) claimed such an approach would not alter the dominant ideology but rather neatly complement it in that the humanities curriculum "can easily be relegated to special curricula for the 'less privileged, the less able'..." (p.64). Both educators were grappling with the problem of how to make sense of the question 'what for?' in respect of a compulsory conventional curriculum being delivered to increasing numbers of disaffected students. The applicability or appropriateness of the conventional curriculum to socially alienated groups lies at the heart of critiques of the social organisation of knowledge (Giroux, 1989; Kauffman, 1993; Sirotnik, 1990).

The disenfranchisement of certain social classes and curriculum's role in this was echoed in the US during the late Sixties and early Seventies by the more radical voices of Postman & Weingartner (1969) and Freire (1972). Their call was for an active conceptualising of knowledge. Postman and Weingartner, as did Stenhouse, saw conceptual dialogue as the central activity. However they saw people as the cultural source, from whose dialogue curriculum should arise. The imposition of curriculum as a deemed good implied to them

alienation and disenfranchisement. Freire (1972) paralleled Holly's (1973) "humanist-materialist" approach , seeking a socially transformative outcome from education. However, where Holly differentiated "social realisation from individual" (p.133) on the basis that one is economic/political and the other is conceptual and sensitive, Freire (1972) invoked Leninist "praxis" to bring material outcomes to the humanist educational ideal. Praxis, he claimed, went beyond the potential dialogue to see reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed.

The structure of the conventional curriculum, both in the US and the UK was being challenged by questions concerning
(i) its appropriateness for disadvantaged groups, *and*
(ii) recognition of pedagogy's role in turning curriculum from an object into a meaning-making process.

It had been argued by Bruner (1960) and Hirst (1965, cited in Holly, 1973, p. 128) that curriculum should, rather than function as controller of concepts, arise over time as a schema created by and representing the fundamental concepts of our society. Holly (1973) and Freire (1972) could not accept the notion of subject disciplines being a logical derivation. They argued that the curriculum is historically transmitted and represents the *status quo*. Holly (1973) signalled the shift in importance from 'subject' as *discipline* to 'subject' as *person*:

> A humanist-materialist approach is concerned to erect criteria which link the individual with society, the child with learning. Decisions should be made on the basis of how generally important the learning is for the pupil. Once that decision is made, other decisions follow, about pedagogy involved, motivation, arousal, seriation, lateral development, time. (p.136)

Core curriculum

Lawton (1975) and Skilbeck (1980) pursued a re conceptualising of the curriculum, so that it should not languish in what Freire (1972) called a "subjectivist immobility" (p.27), merely waiting for change to occur. The new vision involved a reconsideration of what was most important to our culture and how this would be represented in the curriculum. This would not prove to be the revolution sought by more radical scholars (Freire, 1972; Illich, 1971; Marcuse, 1964). It would be expressed in what Holly (1973) termed a "root and branch" approach. The core, along with more optional peripheral learning, would be required to reflect the needs of all students of the relevant societies. An inclusive general curriculum was being conceived, though not yet formulated in such terms.

Social efficacy in the UK and social justice in the US have made it necessary to include all minority groups in the mainstream of reform (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1992). Both the UK and Australian systems have gone about a lengthy and complex task of describing a common core essential for all students (Skilbeck, 1980; 1982; 1993).

From two angles, then, the curriculum has been interrogated for its capacity to redress disadvantage. What is essential as general curriculum emerges as the major contribution of the British-centred debate (Daniels & Ware, 1990; National Curriculum Council, 1989; Swann, 1988), while how to participate for equitable outcomes has been the major concern of scholars and practitioners in the US (Bilken, 1989; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 1992).

Access to curriculum for all

The measures taken in the UK and the US to resolve the respective concerns for an encompassing and well-accessed curriculum for all, with disabled persons specifically considered, have been led from both policy and grass-roots levels. The UK has a history of government-initiated enquires such as the 1978 Warnock Report for the Department of Education and Science (DES) into Special Education Needs, which took the view that the aims of education are the same for all children. This was followed by the Education Act of 1981 which tied identification of certain levels of educational need to a "statement," a document which would legally commit the local responsible authority to providing a curriculum which would meet family and authority-negotiated outcomes. Rather than widen the entitlement of access to a common curriculum, the 1981 Education Act has been criticised by Herr (1993) for creating a "two-tier system of special education" (p.43). Herr, citing a critique by Buss (1985), highlights the dangers of discriminating "children with statements from those without statements" as having "produced the possibility that a 'wider group' of children with milder handicaps might be excluded from the statutory protections of the statement-recording and implementing processes" (Herr, 1993, p.44).

Lawton (1975) foresaw recentralisation in the UK as a requirement to galvanise the curricular direction of a divergent array of independent schools and education authorities. It was eventually invoked in the Education Reform Act of 1988, with a prescriptively common National Curriculum ensuing. The UK position currently represents a top-down, policy-driven process.

The US, on the other hand, has witnessed a rights-affirming, bottom-to-top response, led by parent and advocate-initiated court proceedings. Since the passing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, the US has installed a further seven Federal Statutes affecting the education and civil rights of children and youth with disabilities (Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow 1992). Like most federal bodies in the US, the US Department of Education relies upon the US Constitution to facilitate appropriate change. 'Appropriate' curriculum in the US is a school and district level design and implementation task with Federal guarantees for individual equality of opportunity (Johnson, 1993).

Curriculum reform in Australia

Participation and Equity in Australian curriculum

Australia has not followed the UK or US examples. Ward (1993) notes that "other than in the area of discrimination, Australia does not possess over-arching legislation which establishes rights over and above common law, mandates standards of provision and guarantees adequate financial commitment to the disabled" (p.135). Government-level initiatives have come in the form of policy-by-budgetary control (Hughes, 1993), with equity conditions being required by the Federal Government in order for recurrent and discretionary funding to occur. Australia's *Disability Services Act* (1986) and the funding arrangements to support it, the *Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement* (1991) and the *Disability Reform Package* (1992), established the Commonwealth's responsibility as being for employment support and services, while the States were to handle community living, training and support (Richardson, 1993a). Articulations between education and the Reform Package support have attracted criticism. In a study conducted for the Australian Association of Special Education, Richardson (1993a) found "no evidence that this program is benefiting any school leavers in Tasmania" (p.69). Though there has been consideration from DEET (1993) and NBEET (1993) of the curricular problems of disabled youth, such consideration has occurred within the broader agenda of educating for a more employable, more productive workforce. Education in Australia has shifted from social function, being both service and right, to a more instrumentalist place in the present economic conditions where economic rationalism and productivity are major policy concerns (Hughes, 1993).

Australian secondary school curriculum is undergoing an expansion of identity which reflects a new, pragmatic perspective on citizenship (Hughes, 1993). An imperative to

productivity is evident behind the changes to the curriculum. 'Quality assurance' is already an operative phrase in educational evaluation. Recent visitors from UK school contexts have introduced commodity-related terminology such as 'value-adding' to Australian educational discourse (Vann, 1994).

The quality of a citizen's contribution to the community has long been attributed, at least in part, to the school curriculum :

> An implicit function of a school system is to internalise in its pupils both the commitments and capacities for successful performance of their future adult roles and...to allocate these human resources within the role structure of the adult society. (Parsons, 1959, in Katz & Browne, 1970, xii)

Hughes (1993) identified the sub text of political assumptions common in Australia and the UK. These are: "that education can play a major role (in international competitiveness) and, to do so that the direction of education cannot be left in the hands of education" (p.143). In many countries, including Australia, the UK and the US, school curriculum now has to satisfy criteria of central accountability in a self-management climate with a concomitant focus on its own criterial assessment of competencies for the workplace (Finn, 1991; Mayer, 1992).

National developments and Australian secondary curriculum

The articulation of secondary post-compulsory education to further education and vocational training through the development of the Australian Vocational Training Certificate (Carmichael, 1992), coupled with the Mayer (1992) competencies, have had a growing influence in secondary curriculum development in Australia over the past five years. One example is the *Framework For Curriculum Provision, K-12* (DEA Tasmania, 1993a) which, while having its roots in policy developed prior to current national initiatives, clearly supports competencies-based learning in its generic, cross-curricular use of "personal, linguistic, rational, creative, and kinaesthetic capabilities...These interdependent capabilities are the broad skills that enable people to learn and go on learning throughout their lives" (DEA, Tasmania,1993a, Section A, p.1). The generic work-related competencies initiative presents the functional context towards which our national and local education processes are being directed.

Finn (1991) recommended measures aimed at greater participation of disabled young people, including "support for the further expansion of alternative education and training

options in TAFE and other training agencies " (p. 22). The summary report, *"Putting General Education to Work"* (Mayer, 1992) warns that more than tokenism is required: "Participation alone provides an inadequate basis for evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives to combat disadvantage" (p. 39). Curriculum is required to deliver outcomes, not to simply be 'experienced'.

Australian States and the Commonwealth are more engaged in the issues of nationally developed curriculum, its assessment and its relationship to work-related competencies than in the area of special needs curricular issues. Commonality is focal to means, difference is consequential only as an assessed, end-point outcome. Morrow (1993), however, has reported national-sphere activities which "might be useful to keep an eye on" (p. 45). She first mentions DEET's cyclical review of the Commonwealth's Special Education Program through the Broad Banded Equity Project (BBEP) which treats disability as under broader, more socially identifiable disadvantages such as ethnicity, isolation and gender inequality. Notable also to Morrow is the work of The Youth Working Group of the Disability Taskforce which combines DEET with Health, Housing and Community Services. Morrow, who chairs the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET's) Schools Council, gives a final acknowledgement to its contributions to the BBEP project, in particular recent consideration of whether it is feasible and useful to try to establish benchmarks or indicators which would enable Australia to assess whether any progress is being made on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities (p. 46).

Andrews' (1991;1992) reports on post-compulsory training issues for those with disabilities cast little light on school-level curricular issues, concentrating more on financial and support barriers to further education and national training initiatives such as those in Carmichael (1992) and Mayer (1992). A "national collaborative curriculum" (Curriculum Corporation, 1994a) has been promoted by the Australian Council of Education following the 1989 "Declaration of Hobart" which set the ensuing events in train with its "Commonly Agreed Goals" of education. The result of this initiative has been a tempered move towards consensually moderated, published outcomes intended for students in discrete age bands. These intended outcomes, framed as learning area "national statements" (Curriculum Corporation, 1994b), have been presented to schools alongside "profiles" (Curriculum Corporation, 1994c) that describe examples of work 'typical,' or expected at, particular levels and strands within the disciplines. The pre-eminence of academic subjects is highlighted by the fact that the Australian Council of Education demanded of its writers of the nationally collaborated statements and profiles that the first three (of eight) "areas of

learning" to be drawn up would be Maths, English and Science (Hughes, 1993).

Despite calls at a national level for equitable access to the common core (Andrews, 1992; ACER, 1993; Finn 1991) and the development in all States of inclusive policies which require appropriate curriculum for disadvantaged students (Casey, 1994; Ward, 1993), no specific accommodations of intellectually or multiply disabled students were written into the AEC-initiated statements and achievement level profiles (Curriculum Corporation, 1994c). Nor were there originally guidelines for any assessment variations. As chair of NBEET's Schools Council, Morrow (1993) points to disagreement among members of the Mayer (1992) Committee following its *Access and Equity* audit regarding whether or not national reporting should include students with disabilities. While acknowledging the Committee's recommendation that foundation knowledge not be offered as being prerequisite to the attainment of competence, Morrow (1993) states:

> understanding the problems associated with definition, categorisation and measurement, I think we have a moral obligation to monitor the results of our efforts by identifying at least some of the outcomes for [disabled] students. (p. 46)

Casey (1994) has reported an AEC tender won recently by The Education Support Principals Association of Western Australia to "adapt and extend level one in each of the curriculum areas to make them accessible to children with disabilities" (p. 40). This having been done, some time will elapse before field evaluation can yield results.

Designing access to curriculum

Skilbeck argued nearly twenty years ago that "the best place for the development of curriculum is where the teacher and the learner work together" (1976, p. 90). Curriculum has long been more than simply content and measurement. It is no less than "an essay in cultural analysis and interpretation" (Skilbeck, 1982, p. 27). Boomer and his colleagues (1992) claimed that curriculum is ideally a transaction, a negotiation of the socio-political process of teaching and learning. He saw curriculum as a live entity, about learning but also about "learning never to become fixed" (p. 277). In Boomer's analysis, relevance and effectiveness in 'the' curriculum will not be achieved by delivering the same thing, only better. Designers of curriculum need to examine the active relationship between curriculum, the world that informs it and the students' purposes within that context (Boomer, 1992).

The critical role of teachers in curriculum implementation (Doyle & Ponder, 1978; Fullan, 1993) has been well recognised. Stainback et al. (1985) have argued the centrality of teacher attitude and flexibility to the success of inclusive schooling. Yet the logical ascendancy in curriculum of *content* over *method* cannot be avoided in curricular design. Hirst (1965) was quoted by Holly (1973) as implying that curriculum disciplines represent "experience structured under some form of conceptual scheme" (p. 128). While instructional techniques most effective with students such as those with Mild Intellectual Disabilities have been noted (Brennan, 1985; Elkins, 1992; Wang, 1986), it is not contended anywhere that curriculum outcomes should be targeted on the basis of their instructional or pedagogic efficacy.

The curriculum access problems of students with disabilities are characterised in the literature by the mutually defining concerns of integration and segregation or regular and special settings (Ainscow, 1991; Fulcher, 1990; Gow, 1989; Stainback & Stainback, 1987). Wilton (1993) and Kauffman (1993) have criticised Stainback & Stainback (1987) and Lipsky & Gartner (1989) for their overemphasis on 'place' as the critical variable in disability issues.

Brennan (1985) had contended that an emphasis on social adaptive aspects hindered the evaluation of curriculum employed:

> Assessment of curriculum provision for special needs in ordinary schools is more difficult than in special schools. One reason is that surveys tend to concentrate on 'integration' and thus describing organisation rather than curriculum. (p. 47)

Gow & Calvez (1994), strong proponents of inclusive practice, acknowledge the pitfall in such a single-sightedness. They cite Macmillan & Semmel (1981) who warned, "More time and energy is spent on deciding where a student with special needs should be enrolled rather on how best to provide an educational program and facilitate learning for that child" (Gow & Calvez, 1994, p. 69).

Alternative curriculum models and practices

Special needs curricula

In 1985 Wilfred Brennan wrote the influential book, *Curriculum for Special Needs*, in which he contended that "curriculum stops at the classroom door" (p. 88). He reminded his

readers that, at the policy-making level of curriculum, "it cannot be assumed to know enough of the individual to express task-analysed objectives" (p.88), nor hence an individually pertinent curriculum. Brennan's work was seminal and yet, until recent curriculum focus in the American context, his was the only significant special education text to highlight curriculum rather than teaching style. For this reason, some attention is given here to Brennan's ideas and the field's reactions to them. Brennan was responding to both the impetus toward common learning goals growing in the swell of a core or common curriculum and to critiques of 'adapted curricula' by writers including Haig (1977) and Swann & Briggs (1980). If there was to be a core delivered somewhat compulsorily to 'all' students, curriculum adaptation was a prevailing model of access which might become transported as *modus operandi* for special needs students. Haig (1977) challenged the common rationale of adapted curricula, and described it as:

a) watering down (if you believe strongly enough in the worth of academic subjects ... simplify them),

b) social relevance ('deemed' necessities, politically or socially dictated; edifying and wholesome), and

c) practicality (less able children are more interested in practical subjects or more able at them). (pp. 107-109)

Swann & Briggs (1980) added weight to the caution. They claimed that basic skills were emphasised for slow children only as prerequisites for participation in the ordinary classroom. They foresaw the chauvinism of generic reforms that would again elevate academic over practical learning: "We value and reward literary, mathematical and abstract thinking. We only value highly practical work and thinking in combination with these skills" (p. 45). Brennan rejected calls for a "one-for-all" approach to the curriculum, and argued:

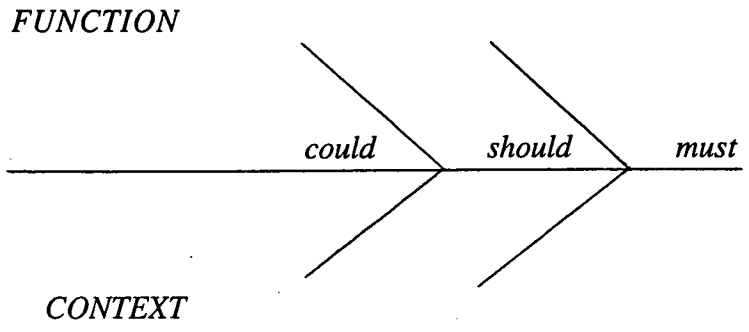
> No general statements of objectives could possibly encompass such a divergence of needs (as exists) ... the individual school curriculum is the first place in which it may be attempted with success. (p. 94)

Brennan (1985) asserted that time makes curriculum necessary through selection. It is a response to the interplay of student learning characteristics and the logistics or constraints of schooling. Some essential learning can be behaviourally manipulated. Some, according to Brennan, could be approached directly through the taught or indirectly through the planned curriculum and must incorporate the hidden curriculum. An appropriate curriculum is a balance or compromise:

> In relation to these varied forms of learning, pupils with special needs are no different from others. Where they differ is in the time taken from the main curriculum by the necessity of meeting their special needs and the importance of maintaining a balance between ... aspects of the curriculum. Further, because special needs are personal, meeting them shifts the balance between the personal and the social aspects of curriculum, reducing time available for the latter. (p. 61)

Brennan attributed the origin of the process of "differential learning" (1985, p.74) to the work of Tansley and Gulliford (1960) in their model of core and periphery in the curriculum. The solution of establishing curriculum "priorities themselves will not resolve the time dilemma unless they can be associated with the idea of levels of learning appropriate to the needs of the pupils" (p. 74). The two key levels in Brennan's (1985, p. 81) model (adapted here in Figure 2.1) are those of functional learning and contextual learning.

Figure 2.1 Model of functional and contextual learning, (after Brennan, 1985)



Functional learning is described as that which is essential to later life, and must be "accurate, permanent, integrated and generalised...characterised by thoroughness and proficiency " (p.75). It should abide in the "core" of the curriculum. Contextual learning (in the sense of context-specific) is according to Brennan (1985), elicited by contact with the environment and might not be able to be made explicit. It is "recognised, appreciated, associated ... characterised by awareness and familiarity" (p.75). It is the capacity of the curriculum to deliver the functional learning which defines an appropriate curriculum in Brennan's (1985) model. "Criteria for curriculum inclusion are not so rigorous at the context level" (p.80). Functional learning is capable of being generated in any effective learning environment. It encompasses survival skills and basic, functional academics. Social skills, on the other hand, are

more developmentally changing, context-related and context-generated. Hence a significant proportion of social and vocational learning would, under this model, be best achieved in context. For Brennan (1985) the immediate contexts include the classroom (the dominant peer context), the workplace (the dominant adult context), home or community.

In a critique of UK special education practice, Copeland (1990) saw Brennan's work as challenging the vertically ordered curriculum of English comprehensive schools with their expanding subject range and consequent fragmented structure of teaching periods. Brennan's ideas were

> mainly oriented toward the world of work and developing life skills ... courses likely to be offered by groups of teachers consciously planning to work across the curriculum. (Copeland 1990, p.11)

Differentiation and Individualisation

The issue of curriculum differentiation in the United Kingdom is a vexed one, particularly so since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1989. Hammond & Read (1992) stress the teacher-dependent way that the UK's "one curriculum" is ideally to be interpreted to an mixed ability student population on an *individualised* rather than *individual* basis. The individualised program is no different to the one in which the student is immersed. That classroom program, offered to all class members, is presented to the student with special needs at a level of complexity with which the student can manage success. In order to hold step with the class as a whole, pace and extent of learning is governed by the relative difficulty of the content. The ideal being pursued would conform to that described by Brennan (1985): "the interaction of different objectives in the same learning activity is a sure sign of a mature curriculum" (p.92). This individualised, supported access to the compulsory curriculum is contrasted by Hammond & Read (1992) to differentiated, alternative curricular provision. An individual program, as distinct from an individual*ised* program, might be unique in its content, pace and purpose.

> The National Curriculum has been designed as an entitlement curriculum for the individual ... differentiating learning ... through individualisation is one of the strategies ... objective, independent and critical thinking comes from a contextualised attitudes, skills and knowledge blend. (Hammond & Read, 1992, p. 140)

Each UK student has a right (entitlement) to learning under the topic and skill headings

defined by the National Curriculum. To what depth and level this is achieved will depend upon the teacher's individualising of that main fare. The concept of a specially written, uniquely designed and delivered curriculum or program is not compatible with the 'mandatory' UK national curriculum model. Students whose capacity to keep touch with even an individualised version of the main-fare may be "statemented" (Copeland, 1991). A "Statement" is a statutory document negotiated among case-relevant personnel which mandates support needed to achieve ambit outcomes for the student.

British scholars, among them Mittler (1992) and Swann (1988) have indicated an entrenchment of a two-tiered special needs arrangement has come from the statements system, on two grounds. First, the cost of supporting the statement when under ordinary school provision, dissuades such schools from integrating statemented students. Second, there is a division within ordinary schools of those with statutory support and those without statutory support. This critique has been well summarised by Herr (1993).

Dyson, Millward & Skidmore (1994) were critical of some UK interpretations of the whole school approach which emphasise individualisation for mastery of "unreconstructed curriculum through unreconstructed pedagogy" (p. 311). Their study described the successes of three secondary schools whose special needs approaches, "reconceptualised" pupils as "learners who are inherently capable of participating in common curricular experiences provided only that those experiences are appropriately structured by their teachers " (p. 308). Brennan's (1985) legacy is evident. He valued the process of curriculum design as:

> ensuring the teacher is clear in mind about the aims and objectives appropriate for the pupils ... (it) assists the teacher in behaving with freedom...without it individualisation loses its purpose and activity may lead nowhere (p. 60).

Functional curriculum as a US perspective

Most US research in the area of curriculum for special needs since the 1976 *Free and Appropriate Education Act* has focussed upon socio-political outcomes such as social justice and equity, as generated by integration (Lipsky & Gartner, 1993; Stainback & Stainback,1987); the individualisation of curriculum plans (Biklen, 1989; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986) with particular attention to the instructional methods applicable (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Christenson, 1987); and, transition to adult roles (Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985; Johnson, 1993).

While identifying strengths and anticipating weaknesses of individual learners has been noted as essential to the design and delivery of curriculum suitable for disabled students (Bracey, 1990; Choate et al., 1992), the labelling of students has been widely criticised both in the US and in Australia (Ashman & Elkins 1994, Stainback et al., 1985; Fulcher, 1990; Hayes, 1990). Despite educators' awareness of the multi-dimensional nature of disability (Ashman & Elkins, 1994), schools are liable to define programs according to narrow, entry-dependent deficits, rather than design curriculum(s) for outcome benefits. The process is one of deficit credentials rather than outcomes motives. One of the more elegantly simple constructs for the de-categorisation of students' disability-defined special educational needs, is the call of Polloway, Patton, Epstein & Smith (1989) to label the *program*, not the *student* (p. 16). Identifying curriculum provisions for their purpose-built and learner-referenced characteristics engages educators in curriculum differentiation. The most prevalent, or at least a well established alternative to the core academic curriculum is functional curriculum.

The curriculum stakeholders or reference-group-at-large has widened from its narrow school base, with a strong emergence in special education of an ecological orientation to curriculum context (Semmel, 1987). The social justice perspective of disability in education has introduced all sectors of society, including transport, employment, housing, health access, legal advocacy, and community recreation, as integral players. In a related development, since special education is being drawn into general education, the heat of the argument is shifting from place to program and outcomes (Kauffman & Pullen 1989; Kauffman, 1993; Wilton, 1993). While the centrality the academics at the core of the curriculum is still maintained, the notion is no longer being taken for granted in western democracies with stakeholders engaged in making sense of the more vocationally focussed educational agendas (Hughes, 1993).

General education has embraced the work-specific orientation of technical education and has elevated long-held curriculum priorities of special education: pre-vocational skills and citizenship. The emergence of work-related content and outcomes in schooling is bringing into cross-current the traditional high school programs of surface-level work awareness (including careers guidance) with the more purposive supported job-placement training more practised in special education (Halpern, 1992).

The task for scholars and practitioners is to accommodate the normalisation ideal of full participation in mainstream curriculum area content to the widest range of student abilities.

Author/researchers such as Lipsky & Gartner (1989) argue that schools must be able to provide for an enrolment population representative of the broad community (which includes disabilities and exceptional learning needs at all points in the continuum) before 'equity' can be claimed by any system.

Gable & Hendrickson (1993) researching the effects of inclusion in the US, report, with particular emphasis on the 'mild disabilities' cohort, claimed that among the most far-reaching changes in education is the manner in which students with mild disabilities are served. A major reason for this shift is what has become known as the 'Regular Education Initiative' (REI). Proponents of the REI assert that the 'two-box' system of regular education and special education is dysfunctional and detrimental to students. An example of the initiative is the Every Student Succeeds (ESS) project (Far West Laboratory, 1993), sponsored by the State of California in 23 schools. It encouraged "participating schools" to take its at-risk high school learners through an enriched, (in the sense of unadulterated or watered down), "district-adopted" (hence locally identifiable as mainstream) or core curriculum based on the state curriculum frameworks. This approach emphasised "a cross-curricular, not fragmented approach with generic core capabilities at its heart. Teachers have to work together on an integrated model" (Far West Laboratory, 1993, p. 4.). The spirit is very similar to the cumulative effect of Tasmania's *Framework for a Curriculum Provision, K-12* (DEA, Tasmania, 1993a) and Tasmania's recently released policy on inclusion (DEA, Tasmania, 1994a).

Gable and Hendrickson (1993) acknowledged that "several decades of so-called efficacy studies have failed to produce a clear-cut picture of the most appropriate educational alternatives" (p. 13). Rather than advocate a one-for-all, common mainstream offering, what they envisaged is that the "present system of special education in which we classify and place students would be replaced with various pupil services. " (p. 2)

The US educational community has long entertained serious debate about *general* versus *specific* purposes or programs in curriculum and the validity of delivering one in preference over the other, whether race, ethnicity or disability are advanced as rationale (Halpern, 1992; Semmel, 1987). Supported as they are by a powerful cache of public laws which "guarantee" social justice for the disabled, advocates such as Wang (1989), Stainback & Stainback (1987) and Lipsky & Gartner (1989) have been unable to 'put away' the issue of curriculum differentiation. This is seen by some educators as evidence of the actual contribution which certain differentiations can make to the equity of disabled students (Kauffman, 1993; Semmel, 1987).

Phelps (1985), Zigmond & Thornton (1985), Thornton (1987), Wagner (1989) and have criticised the lack of vocational preparation afforded disadvantaged or handicapped youth at secondary level. Phelps (1985, p. 3) asserted that "in most states the access to and quality of vocational programs has already been significantly reduced and eroded" by a misconception of social justice which seeks to hold up the academic curriculum as the rallying flag of integration. The time and effort required to accommodate students to the pre-existing curriculum is seen as robbing from the non-academic curriculum domains. [cf. Brennan's theorising of curriculum as compromise (p. 21, 1985)]

Clark (1994) has advanced the notion of *functional* curriculum as an antidote to curricular paralysis and irrelevance. The term 'functional academics' has traditionally denoted a shift from the traditional academic purpose of basic literacy and numeracy. Functional curriculum is sometimes referred to in the US literature as life skills instruction (Brolin, 1991; Cronin & Patton, 1993). Just how successful the traditional curriculum offerings are with disabled students has been raised in the US as a vital issue:

> As early as 1979, the Carnegie Council of Policy Studies in Higher Education stated in an educational reform paper that public education approach to teaching basic skills and academic content was successful with only about two thirds of the school population ... Follow up studies of former special education students including the majority of students referred to as having mild disabilities, support the Carnegie study contention that another approach should be considered.
>
> (Clark, 1994, p. 38)

This academic emphasis was also being questioned during the 1980s in the UK: "curricula for slow learning children concentrate on basic skills (simply) because they are essential for participation in the ordinary classroom..." (Swann & Briggs, 1980 p. 45). Containment was mistakenly seen as of central concern, rather than school-to-community skill transfer.

'Endorsement' is a key factor in the US differentiation debate. An endorsement describes system-approved licence given to a school administrator or teacher to implement a curriculum alternative, outside that which might be considered "mainstream", in order to fulfil the 'appropriateness' obligations of the *Education of All Handicapped Children Act*, of 1975, P.L.94-142. Clark (1994) criticises some US states for limiting the delivery of a functional curriculum to only those categories of disability listed for endorsement, usually severe/profound disabilities. Citing his own work (1979) and that of Kokaska & Brolin (1985), Clark (1994) argues that not only has it been long established that many students

with disabilities require a more functional curriculum, but that "functional curriculum should begin formally when these children enter the public schools" (p.38). Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities are no exception, given the Carnegie (1979) findings.

Recent US examples of functional curriculum include the *Community-Referenced Curriculum* (Smith & Schloss, 1988) and the *Community Living Skills Taxonomy* (Denver, 1988). The most celebrated, however, is the *Life-Centred Career Education* model (Brolin, 1991). Brolin's LCCE has been exported to other countries such as Taiwan for their school-to-community transition programs(Elkins, in AASE, 1994) It is organised around 22 competencies needed for adult living, and clustered around three basic domains of: Daily Living, Personal-Social, and Occupational guidance and Preparation. These conform precisely to the areas identified by Clark (1994, p. 37) as comprising the content of a functional curriculum.

In order to give functional curriculum a specific context and focus, Clark draws a distinction between a functional curriculum, in the sense of a document or written guide for all students within a setting, and a functional curriculum approach, which "permits educators and families to look first to what a child's instructional content should be before determining where and how it should be provided" (p.38). Brennan's (1985) distinction between *functional learning* and *contextual learning* is evoked in this concept. The concern is not whether the student is in an inclusive class or not:

> There may well be positive benefits associated with various current placement alternatives. (But) If those benefits do not include life skills instruction at all or in sufficient amount ... the educational placement is not providing an appropriate functional education. (Clark, 1994, p. 37)

The context of reference in a functional approach is most pointedly the community, with a consequent curriculum focus upon the content of knowledge and skills required for current and future community-based participation. Pitfalls were foreseen by Brennan to lie in the very contextuality of the approach and its collaborative demands:

> Functional skills instruction must be planned deliberately and implemented with families and general education teachers. Implementation of this type of planning and collaboration becomes increasingly more difficult and complex as students move from elementary to high school settings. This may affect both the nature and quality of both functional skills acquisition and inclusion. (Brennan, 1985, p. 38)

Australian curriculum research and policy

In Australia, for "students with a mild intellectual disability, there are no established curricula (i.e., skills and competencies that are learned in a hierarchical fashion)" (Ashman 1994, p. 467). At the high school level, "in most cases the work program involves functional academics" (p. 467). Such a program sits between an academic preparation and a purely functional curriculum as experienced characteristically by more severely disabled students. It predicates later or concurrent involvement in pre-vocational programs, increasingly likely to include the regular student body. However, functional academics are presented in most secondary schools in remedial, short-term programs, rather than long-term, planned education.

The Australian literature is scant in its addressing of the effects upon young adolescent students of differentiated and alternative curricula. Watts et al., (1978) conducted an extensive study in three states (NSW, Victoria and Queensland) in pursuit of the "optimal educational placement of mildly intellectually handicapped children" (p. 1). The focus was mainly upon peer acceptance and teacher competence in the face of integration. The children upon whom the study centred were primary school students, of the age range 10.3 years to 12.8 years. The study took a dual stakeholder sample, cross-referencing the opinions of teachers and parents of students in either regular or special schools. Parents emphasised their children's academic difficulties, most notably in regular placements. Teachers emphasised social skills shortfalls, again mostly in regular settings, with the main curricular conclusion from the study being that "Over 80 percent of all teachers in the sample (N=1165) believed that mildly intellectually handicapped pupils require special curricula and materials and special teaching methods" (p. 214). In one interesting by-line, the study found that over 70 percent of teachers across the three states believed that "most" of the MID students in regular classes were "aware of the fact that they were slower than the other pupils" (p. 187). A further 19 percent felt "some" were aware. While the study does not go beyond concluding from this that there is a likely predisposition to poor attitude on the part of MID students, a question is raised by the finding that 70 percent of MID students were aware of their slowness: How well disposed might a self-perceiving 'slower' child be to curriculum differentiation that takes this slowness directly into account?

Certainly little has been recently evaluated by way of curriculum outcomes for Mildly Intellectually Disabled students from inclusive settings. This might partly be explained by the shift away from categorisation and identification (Fulcher, 1990) or by Brennan's

(1985) assertion that "surveys tend to concentrate on 'integration' and thus describing organisation rather than curriculum" (p. 47). Where identification becomes cloudy, follow-on or evaluation becomes equally difficult.

Morrow (1993) referred to a study conducted by Teese (then in progress, currently in press) who was "commissioned to develop an analytical and reporting model which would enable the country to make judgements on whether particular groups of students were benefiting as they should from their education" (p. 45). Using Victorian school system data on retention and participation, Teese correlated curricular subjects with achievement and post-school pathways. Morrow (1993) lamented:

> (Teese's) findings provide a rich lode of information on how well (or badly) schooling is serving particular groups of students. Unfortunately, he was not able to include students with disabilities amongst the groups being investigated: *the data were simply not available* (p. 46) (emphasis added)

The recent Commonwealth Project of National Significance in Special Education (DEET, 1993), titled *Including Students with Disabilities in Regular Classrooms*, provides extensive anecdotal reports of program trials. Those chosen are professional and service development programs aimed at increasing teacher and community skills, with only indirect focus upon student learning behaviour. Remarks are tabulated from teachers who use the programs. Benefits to students are evaluated only by the program providers.

Australian States differ to only a small degree in their special needs provision policies, with Victoria arguably the least pluralist of them in its 'no-choice' legislated position on integration (Harvey, 1992). The underpinning equity-based principles of all Australian States are the same. A consistency in system objectives, provisions and curriculum perspectives on special needs is evident (Ward, 1993).

Curriculum for adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

Cormack (1991), in a meta-analysis of research literature for the South Australian Department's Junior Secondary Review, made reference to several salient points on adolescence in general. Despite the suggestion that "the period of life from ages 10 to 15 represents for many young people their last best chance to choose a path toward productive and fulfilling lives" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989), Cormack

claimed study of the period is largely neglected in developmental psychology. He cited Collins' (1991) conclusion from historical research and documentary analysis that "It is the *Forgotten Era.* The study of this period of life has never been very popular among developmentalists" (Cormack, 1991, p. 3, italics in original). This apparent failure of theorists to come to terms with adolescence is difficult to fathom, given that it is in adolescence that the majority of students in Western cultures reach the culmination of their compulsory schooling. An issues paper, *Preparing Teachers For Working With Adolescents* (Board of Teacher Registration, Queensland, 1994), claimed curriculum is central to the system's failure to meet adolescents' needs holistically. Compartmentalisation of the curriculum, a preoccupation of schools with academic content and poor linkage to community contexts were noted causes.

Transition as a curriculum orientation for MID students

Researchers in Australia have responded to the concurrent (if not synthesised) influences of equity and work-related curriculum by focusing on transition. This represents a contextualising of schooling as integral to the community, its workplaces and processes of lifelong learning (Parmenter & Knox, 1989). Studies in the area of transition and intellectual disabilities have found that work-related and community-oriented curriculums are most highly valued among proximal stakeholders (Dempsey & Small, 1992; Knox & Parmenter, 1990), and are particularly effective for those with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. Knox & Parmenter's (1990) study found intellectually disabled people did not consider school integration a priority in transition while 15 percent of the disabled respondents suggested improved community integration processes. This pattern was somewhat reversed in the non-intellectual disabilities group. For both groups quality work experience was highly regarded.

Green (1991) has supported the Knox & Parmenter (1990) study with findings that work experience programs must be well planned to account for the lack of social experience and sophistication of intellectually disabled students. Caycho (1991) studied the relative success of MID students, over more severely disabled, to match employment to their work experience with the implication that exposure to realistic knowledge of the world of work may be as significant a determinant as cognitive ability and that an increase in one may help address disadvantages from the other. Green (1993) cited work experience as best integrated within a program combining preparation and in-situ training. She also emphasised recreation and friendship-building skills in the track records of intellectually disabled who manage to maintain open employment. Given slower learning rates of

intellectually disabled persons (cf.Choate, 1993), Green (1993) suggests that "Work Experience should begin no later than the last three years of schooling...with the last two years being concentrated on site" (p. 4).

NSW researchers Dempsey & Small (1992) followed a research lead indicated by Hasazi, Gordon & Roe's (1985) US study which found that students who attended special school with no vocational training were less likely to find and keep jobs than those who had received vocational training. Dempsey & Small (1992) concluded, from a comparison of teachers' emphases in work preparation to employers' expectations, that teachers were more inclined than teachers to value social skills like impulse control and friendship maintenance, while employers were more emphatic about work ethic dispositions such as punctuality and deference than were teachers. Dempsey & Small (1992) mused that the likely reason lay in the 'taking for granted' by each party of the other's alternate orientations. Schools have punctuality built-in through the 'timetable'. Workplaces, on the other hand, assume no responsibility for generating such social graces in their employees. Dempsey & Small concluded that the gap between employers' and teachers' perceptions was not as great as had previously been suggested by the previous research of Burton & Bero (1984).

A broad study conducted in the US (Carson-Huelskamp & Woodall, 1991) found from large samples of employers in Michigan and New York that the most valued characteristics of *all* workers rested not in the academic areas of computer programming, language skills and scientific knowledge, but rather in personal and social attributes such as punctuality, respect for others and honesty/integrity (Results of the US study are reported alongside Tasmanian data in the Results Chapter). The interpersonal focus of life skills and pre-vocational programs for intellectually disabled students may be found to have broader relevance to general curriculum than has been initially assumed.

Although not contemporary studies, two pieces of related of research warrant brief reference. Queensland's Guidance and Special Education Branch (1981) initiated a destination survey of students exiting special education. This study found 57 percent of Queensland's intellectually disabled students had post-school employment of a full or part-time nature. Skidmore (1982), took this study of work experience practices in special education further and described the MID adolescent students, who were the main participants, as "limited in the narrow range of abilities used in the classroom, but not necessarily in others. These students are those with limitations *restricting rather than removing* their prospects for open employment" (p.6, emphasis added).

Australia's most (if not only) significant destination research to include MID adolescents since Skidmore's (1982) Queensland study, has been the NSW *Follow Along Study* (Parmenter, 1994b) which was initiated in 1991. Only 3-5 percent of those involved were integrated into regular high schools. The great majority of those integrated students were MID students. Parmenter states, "Youths with Mild Intellectual Disabilities were more likely than any other [disabled] group to be in full-time award wage employment, or to be actively seeking work " (p. 179). While 71 percent of the MID students had held at least one award wage job since leaving school, only nine (or 43 percent) of the total (special and regular) MID cohort were employed when the survey was conducted.

The NSW study points up a shift from the traditional "self/family/friend network" in employment and participation to more school and community partnership as a result of the transition planning process (Parmenter, 1994b, p. 179). Parmenter however indicates that government initiatives in community living programs have overemphasised "physical arrangements and functional skills" (p. 182) to the detriment of quality of life issues. The success of school level state and federal inclusion initiatives has been patchy and Parmenter concludes that

> The scene at the secondary school level is fairly depressing as the structural practices are more resilient to change. Research into the curriculum and transition needs of secondary age students with disabilities is fairly sparse, and there are serious deficits in teacher preparation ... The whole question of inclusion for this group of students challenges the current structure of our secondary schools (p.182).

Teacher skills for curriculum deliberation

Recommendation 22 of the 1983 Review of Special Education in Tasmania stated:

> The policy of integration should be pursued, and in consequence, the employment of teachers should be dependent on the possession and demonstration of appropriate attitudes, capabilities and skills. (Education Department, Tasmania, 1983, p. 1)

Some ten years later, an ACER (1993) study has specifically highlighted concerns, common across States among the 350 government and non-government schools surveyed, about "the adequacy of training for classroom teachers to provide the skills and techniques necessary for teaching students with disabilities" in inclusive schooling (p. 2). At a systems level, teachers' preparedness does not appear to have developed along with the imperative to inclusion. The importance of teachers' skills in the area of literacy for

intellectually disabled persons is emphasised in a *Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities*, for DEET (van Krayenoord, Elkins & Gunn, 1992). Recommendation is made that preservice teachers "be *required* to be *competent* in teaching individuals with intellectual disabilities" (p. 22, emphasis added). Australia's largest schooling system, NSW, has emphasised the role of teachers in making regular schools special (DSE, NSW, 1992). Wiltshire, Mc Meniman & Tolhurst (1994) in the recent review of the Queensland school curriculum, *Shaping the Future*, call for substantial skill-building at undergraduate and graduate levels. The report cites a paper by Elias (1993), commissioned for the Queensland review's Panel , which states:

> It is not enough to simply increase teachers' awareness of special educational needs through "introductory" courses ... Too much "awareness" and not enough practical skill can be detrimental since it can make teachers feel inadequate and threatened (Butt, 1989). Put simply, initial teacher training and induction must increase all teachers' abilities to meet the needs of all pupils in their classes. (Wiltshire et al., 1994, p. 160)

Moves in the US concerning the transportability of common-held teacher competencies and accreditation have rekindled an appreciation of a component of intervention skills in an inclusive climate. US researchers Gable & Hendrickson (1993) assert that "at both the preservice and in-service level, regular and special education teachers should learn to assess and teach academic and social skills to all students" (p. 14).

From the UK, Bowman, et al. (1985), cited in Wedell (1993), counselled UNESCO that teacher training must not only provide greater pedagogical competence to deal with conditions that handicap children in regular settings, but also "necessary managerial skills for mobilising the resources available to them, and to alert them to more effective collaboration with the support services..." (Wedell, 1993, p.236). Mittler (1992), also speaking from a UK standpoint, claimed the initial training of secondary teachers must reduce the myopia of specialised subject teaching and gain solid cross-curricular skills.

Tasmanian initial teacher preparation is currently under joint University and DEA review for its coherence with the State's inclusion policy (DEA, Tasmania, 1994a) which became incorporated into its broader *Equity in Schooling* policy (DEA, Tasmania, 1995). The curriculum for the University of Tasmania's four year Bachelor of Education is replacing its unit on "Exceptional Children", which included specific focus on prevalent disabilities and related learning difficulties, in favour of an approach which is to 'embed' (Dempsey, 1994) pedagogical and professional skills of assessment and intervention into a broad study of

human development.

Tasmanian provisions in context

Tasmanian approach to special educational needs

While Tasmania's Department of Education and the Arts has not legislated a policy of mandatory integration implementation, the State's recent (and first) *Policy on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools* (DEA, 1994a) named integration and inclusion as fundamental bases and goals for education in the state. Special education, including some specialist settings and the whole of the Student Support Services, will continue to operate as options for demonstrated need (DEA Tas., 1995), but will be identified within the main-frame of education. It is the view of the DEA's policy on *Equity in Schooling* (1995) that "Special needs ... are unmet needs" (p.31) and that, as provisions improve, there will be fewer students who have 'special needs'. School Districts are to be responsible for the greater majority of students with disabilities or exceptional needs, comprising mainly students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. Policy-level leadership in special education has emphasised that educators should take a "macro-view; concentrate on the system rather than on the individual. This must be able to be translated at a local level" (Jacob, 1993a).

Tasmania's general educational approach has focussed on the teaching and learning aspects of curriculum. Consulting firm, *Cresap* (DEA, Tas., 1990), in its rationale for the restructuring of the Tasmanian education system, disparagingly described the State's educational culture as "process oriented, not outcome or performance oriented" (p.22). The *Cresap Report* acknowledged the Tasmanian Education Department's positive cultural signatures of professionalism, pride in curricular achievements, independence, emphasis on personal relationships, expectation of consultation. The report, however, in a tone of corporate 'realism', chided:

> A system becomes dysfunctional when its beliefs about what is required to be effective are either inconsistent with resource availability or cannot be directly measured or related to its actual performance. (DEA, Tasmania, 1990, p.23)

Special needs curriculum measures such as aide-supported participation and lower pupil/teacher ratios for life-skills and community access programs become problematic as they are subsumed to the broader systemic budget. Elkins' (1992) reflection on the broader field is apt: "the potential conflict between economic rationalism and social justice is now much more plain" (p.3).

In proposing a Tasmanian inclusive model, Jacob (1990) stated "the challenge for policy-makers is to provide the necessary direction and incentive for change, while allowing enough flexibility for individual interpretation and implementation, over a reasonable time-span" (p. 4). Despite this orientation, there is some administrative-level evidence of undervaluing special school provisions. A *Memorandum to District Superintendents and Special School Principals* (DEA, Tas.,1993b) reported that one of the State's districts had "abolished" its special schools in favour of a resourcing Special Support School model. The same phrase was again published in the Department's report (DEA, Tas., 1994b) *Entry Level Training Feasibility Study : Students with Intellectual Disability.* In a keynote address to the 1992 Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) conference, Kauffman (1993) cautioned against the use of such "negative imagery" (p.7) which "demeaned" special education, citing his countrymen Wang & Walberg (1988), Lipsky & Gartner (1989) and Stainback & Stainback (1992) as those who have been most loose in this regard.

All Tasmanian School Districts are in fact developing their special schools to be 'Support Schools' whereby specialist skills are increasingly brought within the core enterprise. At this point in time some of the State's special schools have students, some do not. All have a described role to play in the support of students with disabilities in regular schools. Upon this rationale and practice, a wider range of students are intended to benefit from the programming skills of experienced staff. Resources, made scarce as much by Commonwealth means (Richardson, 1992) as by State budgetary limitations, are being directed to those areas about which the proximal stakeholders are most uncertain or ambivalent: teacher skill development and classroom support (AASE, 1994).

School curriculum for special needs in Tasmania

Encouragement is being given by the Tasmanian government and its Department of Education and the Arts to hasten in schools the process of integration of disabled students. The publication in 1994 of a policy on inclusion (DEA, 1994a) provided a frame of reference by which consistency of approach can be achieved across the State's three geographical regions and the seven School Districts. Several factors, only some of which can be traced to the intentions of policy-makers, have seen a majority of Tasmanian students with mildly intellectual disabilities maintained in regular schools: the geography, which sees many schools at large distances from centres with relatively poor public transport; the historical presence of agricultural District High Schools (formerly Area Schools) which,

until recently, have offered less academic, practical options suitable to some large extent for slow learning students; and, a high incidence of small schools with one or two teachers and vertical groupings of mixed age and ability students.

By comparison with the US and the UK trends, Tasmania fares well in terms of inclusion. Tasmania's DEA Educational Planning branch can claim figures of 1.25% of the K-12 student population being in Tasmanian special facilities (Kays 1993). This is half the comparable figure for inclusion of disabled students into the mainstream in New York, home state of the major US advocates for total inclusion (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989).

Secondary curriculum policy in Tasmania has not specifically considered disabled students. *Secondary Education: The Future* (Education Department, Tasmania 1987) presented a set of guiding principles for teachers and schools. Its focus on competencies predated the Finn/Mayer initiatives by at least two years and has stimulated the "capabilities" perspective which underpins the primary version *Our Children: The Future* (DEA, 1991a). These in turn form the key cross-curricular ideas behind the *Framework for Curriculum Provision, K-12* (DEA, Tasmania, 1993a). Each of the three documents provides a theoretical basis for curriculum interpretation by teachers of intellectually disabled students.

No Tasmanian studies are available regarding curricular experiences and outcomes for compulsory school-age (i.e., 16 years and younger) MID students. Though now dated, a system-wide study of teacher and parental opinions, the Curriculum Task Force Report *"On Curriculum Related Ideas and Trends"* (Education Department, Tasmania, 1978) pertained to the general student body. The state was then entering a period of much school-based curricular work. Of interest is the study's finding that curricular options such as career education, prevocational training, work experience and consumer education were uniformly considered by both teachers and parents to be needed in their schools (i.e., were not yet adequate). Few teachers, however, had been involved in school-based curriculum development or provision of these areas. Teachers claimed their decisions about curricular development were based on communication among themselves rather than parent and community expectations or upon their perceptions of students' later life needs. Students' expressed interests or choices were not significant influences upon teachers' curriculum deliberations. Teachers favoured the introduction of a core curriculum of essential, basic skills and knowledge and while believing that responsibility for such was mainly a 'Head Office' decision, they nevertheless claimed a right to significant early input. Parents, while supporting the introduction of the above non-academic subjects, overwhelmingly favoured

the three R's as their high school's curricular focus. The study concluded that school-based curricular decision-making was not likely to be influenced by community expectations. While not directly relating to MID students, the 1978 study shows that, at that time, teachers were key curriculum deliberators, not inclined to ecological planning, and that their deliberations had been favouring the academic domain.

Two descriptive outcomes studies, undertaken in Tasmania under the aegis of the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE), came to different conclusions about parental perceptions of their intellectually disabled children's secondary school experiences of integration. The first by Clarke & Thac (1990) conducted just prior to the *Cresap* (DEA, Tasmania, 1990) restructuring and the more overt Departmental promotion of inclusive practices, found clear misgivings and, at best, scepticism among parents with experience of regular schools. On the basis of student, teacher and parent interviews, the study found the students "seem to experience disadvantages at the formal level of schooling such as relevant curriculum, good transition and career planning and at the informal level through harassment and social alienation". (p. 7)

Clarke & Thac (1990) claimed changes made to the curriculum were not, at that time, "extensive enough ... to make a real difference to the young people interviewed" (p.27). They commented upon inadequate preservice and inservice teacher training on intellectual disability. In contrast, a national study initiated in 1992 by the Tasmanian chapter of AASE and the Commonwealth Special Education Program on *Transition Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* (Richardson, 1993a) and conducted after the *Cresap* report found strong parental and community support for the concept of inclusion and reached more optimistic conclusions. Richardson's study considered the transition of intellectually students into community life and maintained that the transition process is not a patch applied between the cessation of school enrolment and community life. Rather, best practice in US (Johnson, 1993; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990; Wagner, 1989) and elsewhere in Australia (Parmenter, 1994a; Riches, 1992) acknowledged that transition begins before entry to school and continues into adulthood, spanning all stages of schooling.

In the Tasmanian education system, a high priority is currently being given to the issue of school-to-community transition. Richardson's (1993a) study examined the domains of "Interpersonal and Social skills, Work Related skills and Academic skills" (p.59), with reference to components associated in the literature with successful work placement. She found a "remarkable consistency between what parents and teachers thought were important

curriculum components and research findings. All emphasised the importance of social and personal development" (p.59). The study recommended that, guided by principles of "empowerment, locus of control and choice ... Transition education (should) be part of mainstream education and not an add-on" (p.73). The same secondary curriculum should be offered at an "appropriate level" to meet the needs of all students, "not just those who are academically able and well adjusted". (p.73)

The implication of Richardson's study is for a high degree of student-personalised interpretation of curriculum by teachers rather than a reworking of the whole curriculum to meet a wider range of needs. Despite the clear endorsement of curricular components for skills in "making and keeping friends and the ability to make choices" (p.61), and that "secondary education has tended to focus on academic achievement", intellectually disabled students, according to Richardson, should "be subjected to the same assessment procedures as other students" (p.60). Clear shortfalls in the provision of, and rules surrounding, work experience programs as an integral component to the transition process were noted (pp. 60-64). Work experience featured strongly in Richardson's (1993a) study as an area in which expansion is demanded by the broad spread of stakeholders.

Curriculum domains

Research and theory in the area of functional curriculum and the school-to-community transition process has generated several description of skill domains in curriculum. From a synthesis of the various models described in the literature and, in some cases, legislated by governments, a discernible pattern emerges. This is represented in Figure 2.2 (following page).

By considering such domains as contenders for 'time', noted by Brennan (1985) as the key curricular design dynamic, an appropriate balance might be described for an individual or focus group. To allocate a planned learning experience (i.e., its content and outcomes) to any one curriculum domain would not reflect the cross-curricular nature of most learning events (DEA, Tas.,1993a). There is a mix of each domain in most curriculum 'events'. The challenge to seek a 'suitable mix' of domains in the curriculum for particular students or groups of students would appear a worthwhile conjecture in pursuit of criteria for "relevant, rational and realistic" curriculum (Brennan, 1985, p. 112).

Figure 2.2 Curriculum Domains Derived from the Literature

SEMMEL (1987)	BENZ & HALPERN (1987a)	PL101/476 TRANSITION ACT, US (1990)	CLARK (1994)	GREEN (1993)	THIS STUDY
Basic academics	Academic knowledge		Traditional academics		Academic skills
Functional academics	Basic skills	Instruction	Functional academics	Functional academics	
	Independence	Daily living experience	Daily living	Recreation	Life skills
Social skills		Community experience	Personal and social skills	Personal development	Social skills
Occupational education	Vocational experience	Functional vocational evaluation	Occupational guidance and preparation	Work experience and knowledge	Pre-vocational skills

It can be seen that the greatest potential ambiguity in the domain configuration lies in its allocation of "Functional academics" to either the "Academic skills" or to the "Life skills"' domain. Accepting Swann & Briggs' (1980) caution that much basic skills curriculum is targeted at disabled students' coping with the ordinary classroom curriculum, the interpretation here is that those basic skills intended mainly for classroom tasks are of the Academic domain, and those intended for independence and daily living are of the "Life skills" domain.

Research questions

Outcomes-directed preparation for life, work and citizenship has made a necessity of change to flexible, diverse curricular pathways (Board of Teacher Registration, Queensland, 1994). Debates about 'who owns' special education and the stigma attributed to segregation have held our attention to the detriment of consideration of issues in curriculum (Gable & Hendrickson, 1993). Semmel (1987) proposed an action agenda for special education which highlights the dilemmas made evident in the issues of sameness and difference,

'equality and equity', 'mainstream and alternative'. Among the major problems were how to achieve:

> a rediscovering (of) social-occupational education curricula for MH (mildly handicapped) children ... without a return to discriminatory practices of the pre-1960 times, nor permit the current over-emphasis on 'watered down' academic programming. (Semmel, 1987, p. 38)

Semmel (1987) further claimed "what we desperately need is ... research that validates the effects of different pedagogical environments on socially acceptable objectives for Mildly Handicapped students". (p. 61)

Curricular responses to disability are evident in the literature through two dynamics, both of which must be effective if any response is able to claim being 'appropriate'. On one hand there is the pedagogy-focussed response, what Fulcher (1990) and Ainscow (1993) call the *technical* solution. This supposes interpretation, adaptation, individualisation and multi-level presentation of regular, least-differentiated curriculum by the teacher, with the expectation that mixed ability grouping will "maximise the autonomous responsibility of the learner" (Norman, 1993, p. 2). On the other hand is the avowedly functional, multiple-pathway response (Clark, 1994) which gives choice at entry-level to learners and their advocates (including teachers). Pathway alternatives are offered which are reasoned to provide the most advantageous engagement of learner's relative scarcity of time, energy and attention. Success and responsibility are seen to grow from competence. This notion utilises traditionally curricular realms of content and its sequence, configuration or shape. Such curriculum is less generically expressed, and more domain-specific in terms of outcomes.

Brennan (1985) claimed that

> Pupils with special needs require a broader curriculum to compensate for the additional demands [upon them], yet it will not be possible to include all that is desirable in a curriculum limited by time ... No single model or approach is capable of sustaining a full curriculum for children with special educational needs, though all have some contribution which is valuable. (p. 81)

Within this perspective, questions of academic and functional curriculum can be explored free of value judgements surrounding the inclusion and segregation debate. Elkins (1992), argued

> a second system of education for students with disabilities would seem to be

> inconsistent with the government's goals ... abandonment of such an approach does not mean that a continuum of services could not be provided. Rather, it has implications for the provision of appropriate program options by the education system. (p.3)

Alternatives for curriculum provision are considered integral to equitable provisions for many disadvantaged groups (Brennan, 1985 ; Benz & Halpern, 1987b; Clark, 1994; Rieth, 1990).

Research questions emerging from the reading

Research questions raised by problems identified in preliminary field research and by the literature are:

1. **What are the curriculum needs of adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?**

2. **Are the curriculum recommendations of proximal stakeholders consistent with those of more distal stakeholders?**

3. **Can an appropriate mix of curriculum domains be determined for MID students?**

4. **What adjustments are indicated to make the curriculum more appropriate for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?**

Curriculum is something elicited in relationships between stakeholders (Hughes, 1993). Its content and shape, its rationale and its purpose will each invite negotiation between designers, deliverers and 'users'. In so far as every pathway has a context, the present study should be able to elaborate upon the relationship between context and curriculum purpose (Semmel, 1986). That context, however, is not limited to what occurs in the compulsory years of school. The home, community and workplace have, in terms of time, even greater claim to curriculum 'influence'. A student's journey through the school curriculum, unless articulated to further and lifelong learning, is potentially a wasted opportunity.

While curriculum is clearly not independent of teaching and learning (Boomer, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994), in the interest of making a contribution to the design aspects of appropriate curriculum for MID adolescents, this study focuses as squarely as is reasonable on curriculum in its most uncontentious meaning: *a course of study* .

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology through which the research questions have been addressed. It contains two sections. The first presents the reasons for the choice of data gathering methods. Contextual considerations are identified, including the design implications of the study's 'ecological' perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The second section details the methods chosen. A timeline is given which details the commencement and conclusion of each round of data gathering. The designs, respondent samples and procedures of the several data gathering techniques are then detailed. Ethical considerations are also addressed.

The choice of methods in the study

Data gathering and data analysis methods were selected for their capacity to:

- gather, as objectively as possible, qualitative data concerning the focal students and the perceptions of stakeholders, and, in so doing, allow a priority ranking of a range of curriculum elements and processes from the distal (macrosystem) to the proximal (mesosystem);
- be responsive to the experiences of the target students and to account for relevant longitudinal developments in the subjects and their learning conditions;
- make evident any trends, commonalities or differences as they may exist among stakeholder groups' judgements regarding curricular content and outcomes of the local subjects; and
- reflect the theoretical framework of the study, primarily the ecological conceptualisation of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Brennan's (1985) notion that time is the "inescapable constraint which makes curriculum necessary ... it is the presented selection that forms the curriculum" (p.21).

The researcher and the research context

There were pragmatic decisions which influenced the research design. These can be described as relative strengths and weaknesses arising from the researcher's direct involvement in the contexts under investigation.

As a support teacher working in classrooms to design access or adaptations to the regular curriculum for students with learning difficulties, a strength in my circumstances was excellent access to integrated students in the cluster of schools which I serviced. Through this role, I had ready access to students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities, their teachers, parents and many other 'contributors' to their curricular provision and choice. The students were a sample of opportunity, whose school experiences were representative of the problem of interest: the relationships between intellectual disability, school failure and the curriculum. It seemed logical to place those students at the centre of research attention. The six subjects chosen were students whose school histories and current curriculums were not atypical from those of other MID adolescents in the state. A manageable sample was needed to facilitate a single-handed, multi-method project.

A further positive factor was my familiarity with, and access to the subjects' families. This was a non-threatening relationship which ensured parents would not be inhibited by research procedures. At hand, then, was background information which could further the ecological nature of the study's conceptual basis. Good contact had already been established with a number of MID students, over continuous periods ranging from one to four years. Gathering data about (and from) the students over time in various learning contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of processes operating upon their curriculum.

Potential weaknesses lay largely in a possible bias and overly subjective analysis of the situation or results. To account for this, the methods chosen did not rely alone upon personalised interviews or observational methods. A series of questionnaires was used to triangulate with interviews and student participation data drawn from school records and observations. Woods (1985) noted that questionnaires can provide "useful objective information, and also act as a partial test of theories generated locally" (p. 68).

Focal subjects (target students) in the study

The terms 'focal' and 'target' subjects are used interchangeably in the thesis to describe the six MID adolescents whose particular curriculums and school experiences are taken as

examples for the study. The six students each conform to the psychometric criteria of Mild Intellectual Disability detailed in Chapter Two.

At the commencement of the study the students ranged in age from twelve to fifteen years of age. Data gathering occurred over a period of approximately three years. The two females and four males selected represent :

(a) a gender mix,

(b) rural and urban community contexts,

(c) special and regular school bases,

(d) passage into problematic stages of transition, i.e., from primary level to secondary (Grade 6 moving to Grade 7) and from more compulsory curriculum at Grade 8 to accreditable (TCE) course options at Grade 9.

The use of case vignettes as reference points

Early in the design of the research, it was decided to construct short, paragraph length vignettes or cameo case histories. These have been used as stimulus material for a Questionnaire to Stakeholders (Appendix I). The 'potted histories' are presented at the head of the questionnaire as 'grounding' information to which the respondents might 'react'. Principals and parents were consulted to endorse the accuracy (in the sense of being 'true to the lives') of the brief student histories. The jargon and pre-conceptions surrounding disability issues and special education were perceived to be difficult to overcome in a questionnaire. The student vignettes could help avoid some inadvertent 'misinformation'. In some cases a few very nominal details (such as numbers of siblings) were altered to ensure identity was concealed.

Location of the study

The target students were enrolled in schools within the Tasmanian District of Forester which comprises some thirty-five schools and spreads from its District office in Launceston, to schools at a distance of around 100 km. One generalist special school serves a proportion of the District's Mildly Intellectually Disabled students, some 40 of are enrolled at the special school, and several students are partially integrated into regular school programs. The (increasing) majority of MID students are enrolled in regular schools, with their teachers supported in programming by Support Teachers based at the generalist special school.

The District is served by four high schools (including one rural and three urban) which cover Grades 7 to 10, and four District High Schools, all non-urban and which cater for

Grades K to 10. One Senior Secondary College serves the Grades 11 and 12 students of the District. Several of the MID students in the District are successfully retained to Grade 12. In some cases it is necessary for disabled students to continue their secondary college enrolment for an extra one of two years to allow completion of course requirements. Secondary college enrolments are, however, a very small proportion of MID non-compulsory-school-age persons. The Launceston area has a youth unemployment rate of approximately 35 percent, greater if supported short-term training programs are discounted. No specific training or education programs are in place for MID students on completion of their compulsory schooling. Adult Education Literacy courses are rarely taken up by MID exiting students, except where demanded specifically by Commonwealth Employment Service conditions. At Job-Club, Skillshare or group training levels, MID students are not served specifically and are rarely successful in competing for program places which, with increasing demand from non-disabled persons, have become necessarily selective. The great majority of MID youths are deemed too able to partake of the support offered by programs under the *Disability Reform Package* (1992).

Relative size of the focal subject group

Files held at the Forester District's Support School indicated that the six students represented 24 percent of identified and district-funded students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities of similar ages enrolled at both regular or special high schools over the period of the study. (In Tasmania funding of mild - to - moderate intellectual disabilities is a District responsibility, largely accounted for by teacher aides but with scope for specific group program initiatives and discretionary teacher staffing). By the conclusion of the study, the four focal students who had enrolled in regular schools represented 50 percent of those categorically funded MID adolescents in the Forester District who had been fully integrated to their local high school from special school programs. The remaining two target students were, while enrolled in a special school, involved in partial integration programs and alternative vocational programs open to both regular and special school students.

Ecological considerations guiding the choice of methods

The complexity of the human and physical context of curriculum influences and decisions that were studied made compartmentalising them difficult. Teachers' perceptions alone, or those of parents, or even of selected MID students would fail to reflect the full plurality of stakeholders' demands from curriculum. Importantly, the ecological perspective would help accomplish what Woods (1985) called "a distance from the data" (p. 67) or

what Sanger (1994) described as qualitative research's "requirement of evidence of plural viewpoints ... invoking justificatory processes such as triangulation, mutuality, cultural agency, relatability, trustworthiness and reflexivity" (p.178).

Use of a questionnaire instrument across several groups had certain advantages. It could gather data from players out of easy reach, such as administrators and employers. Rather than answering upon the basis of a simplistic definition of Mild Intellectual Disability, respondents could, through the vignettes, more accurately relate to the persons behind the definitions and their influencing ecosystems. The common reference points of the vignettes offered a level of objectivity to the responses. The basic quantification of the responses would also better facilitate prioritising and comparison of data, across several sources.

Interviews, on the other hand, along with some documentary data concerning students' participation in school, would explore and expand upon the lived context of MID adolescent students. Woods (1985) described a similar rationale used by Hargreaves (1978) who pursued an "intersection of micro-interaction and macro-structures" (p.60), and Lacey (1977) who was "concerned to fill out a balanced (research) model which allowed for consideration of personal redefinition of situations as well as situational redefinition of persons"(Woods, 1985, p.60).

The simple statistical analyses given to some of the quantitative data do not relate to a large and statistically robust sample, but to a sample that powerfully reflects and represents the ecology of influences surrounding the target MID students. The respondents to the questionnaire complement the insights, emphases and criticisms arising from the interviews. These are set against accounts from the literature. The resulting 'three dimensional' image, it is argued, indicates clearly the curriculum elements for MID students which warrant most attention by educators and advocates, including parents.

What is important for the study's claims is that the description and analysis of curricular conditions is true to the subjects' experiences (Hopkins, 1980; Sanger, 1994). Those experiences have been considered at every level of the students' educational and social ecosystem. It is understood that no inventory of social or educational influences upon MID students could be truly exhaustive. However, a balance to the study's information base has been sought from a combination of survey method (to access more remote spheres of influence upon the students' curriculum design and choice), with more qualitative means (giving voice to the most immediate influences at school and family

levels). The multi-method research approach has minimised isolated, idiosyncratic viewpoints and maximised the coherence of a several perspectives.

Data gathering methods used in the study

After consideration of the relative merits of a range of methods, a descriptive survey methodology was adopted combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. The multi-method approach included:

1. Questionnaires

(a) To *Stakeholders* (Appendix I) Distributed to an 'ecological' spread of several stakeholder groups ;

(b) To *Employers* (Appendix II) ;

2. Interviews:

(a) With *focal students* (Appendix III);

(b) With *parents of the focal students* (Appendix IV);

(a) and (b) were conducted twice over the research period; and

c) With *teachers of MID students* (Appendix V).

The teacher interviews were supplemented by two other approaches.

First, annotations have been reported from brainstormed reflections by involved teachers (including several of the teachers interviewed) who attended a Special Needs Secondary Curriculum professional development session at District-level;

Second, teachers interviewed were given a printed table to fill out as a follow up 'exercise' to their interview. In it they were asked to estimate the emphases given by teachers in their schools to curriculum domains in subjects undertaken by the target students (Appendix VI).

3. Locus of Control (LOC) measure (Appendix VII).

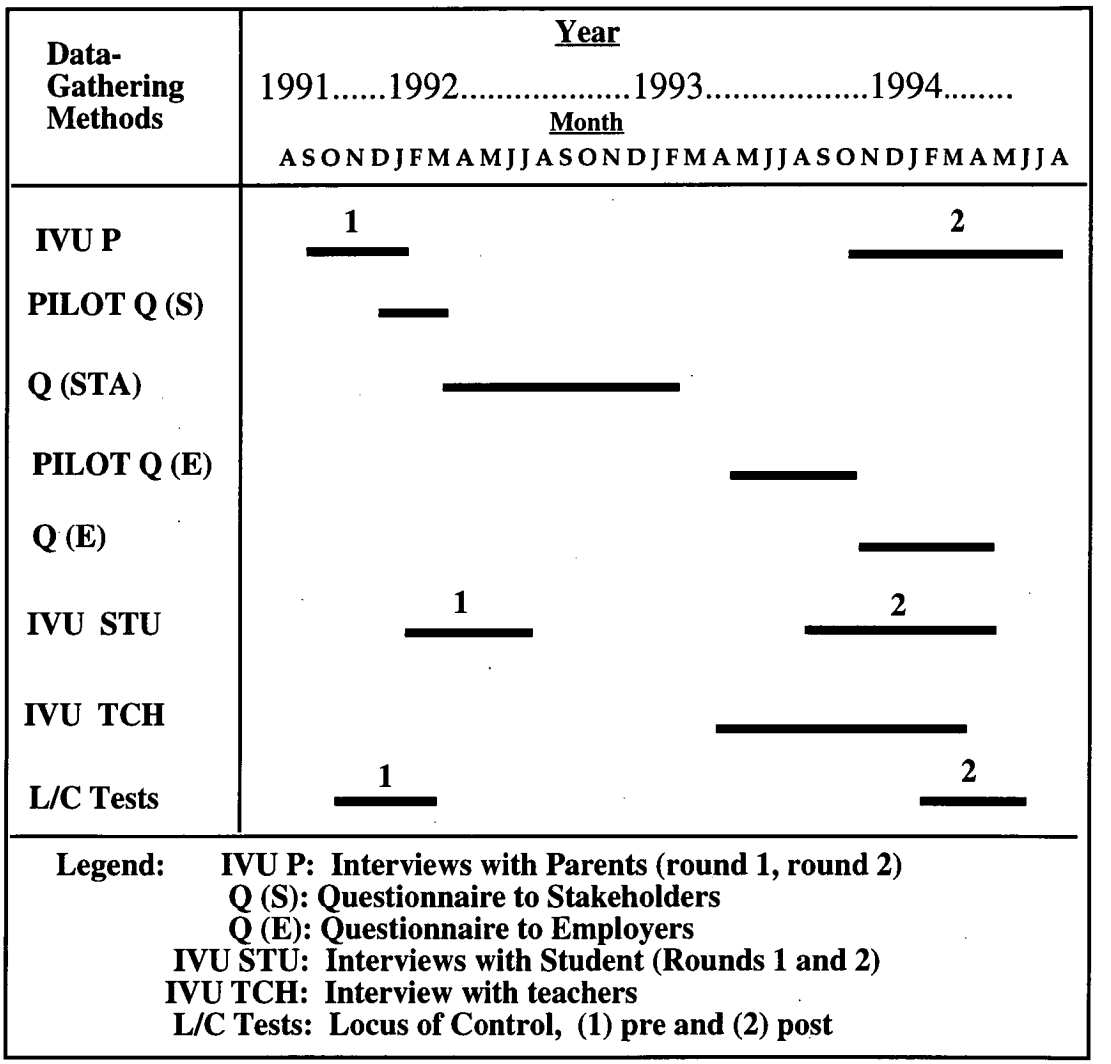
Devised by Knight (1992) specifically for intellectually disabled students, the measure indicates autonomy or other-directedness in students' learning behaviour. While initial data were gathered from four of the six focal subjects, a

post-test was not possible with each student. The outcomes (given in Appendix VII) did not ultimately yield useable results.

Timeline for methods used

The following figure (Fig. 3.1) indicates the commencement and conclusion dates of the data-gathering methods employed in the project.

Figure 3.1 Timeline of data-gathering methods



Respondent samples and procedures of the research techniques

1. (a) Questionnaire to Stakeholder Groups. (Appendix I)

Design

The use of an instrument previously validated was not desirable within the local context chosen for the study. Teacher/pupil relationships and the efficacy of inclusion had occupied almost exclusively the attention of researchers in the field of special needs. Curriculum, in particular, had not been the subject of needs analysis studies at a secondary level in Tasmania.

The Questionnaire items were constructed first from initial interviews with MID students and their parents. The design and items were subjected to several revisions, based on the solicited advice of a validation panel consisting of six persons with expertise in the area of special needs and curriculum. They were: a special school Principal; an AST 3 (Advanced Skills Teacher) of a large high school; a curriculum officer; a special needs support teacher; a tertiary lecturer in special education and a parent who was also employed as a part time teaching assistant within the school District. The items were piloted for length, relevance, clarity and non-ambiguity with eight secondary teachers, six primary teachers and four support teachers, as well as a guidance officer and several parents.

There was no intention to set up an instrument which could be generalised directly to other contexts. Rather, the relatability, reliability and validity of the questionnaire rested upon several considerations. First, relatability (Sanger, 1994) is advanced by the use of pseudonymous case histories, endorsed for their representative nature by several proximal stakeholders in each student's immediate educational context. Second, reliability is argued from the ecological processes which offer multiple cross-referencing of the results gained. Third, the content validity of the item construction which sought the critical input of key proximal stakeholders. Finally, face validity is evidenced from the response rates, from the request figures for survey results, and from the consistency shown by respondents in their answering behaviour, referencing to the situational and performance differences offered in the background information (in vignette form). Respondents' perceptions could be seen to operate from information at hand, rather than from presuppositions or blanket recommendations.

The items

The questionnaire was presented in two sections. The first used a rating scale which recorded respondents' estimations, from greatest to least importance for the subjects, of:

a) Curriculum *content* ; and
b) Curriculum *outcomes*, for each of the six students.

The questionnaire focussed upon six short paragraph-length vignettes which represented pseudonymous case histories of the target students. Respondents were first asked to read the relevant vignette before responding to items pertaining to that particular student. Upon this more informed basis, and from their general knowledge base regarding MID students' school experiences, respondents were asked to rate the relative merits of lesson *content* and *outcomes* of curricula generally available to each focal subject (student).

The second section of the multi-stakeholder questionnaire sought responses to the broader issues of:

a) Preferred relative influence of the identified stakeholder groups in curriculum design, denoted by ranking from 1 to 8;
b) Estimations of the likely 'appropriateness' to MID students of curriculum at various stages of schooling; and
c) Recommended time engagement for MID students in non-academic curriculum domains.

Data was also sought from respondents regarding their level of 'awareness' of MID students at the time of the survey and whether or not they required feedback regarding the results of the study.

The Sample: (Respondents to Stakeholder Groups' Questionnaire)

One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed to stakeholders who ranged from those not interacting directly with the subjects or the MID cohort, such as administrators to immediate stakeholders such as peers and parents. In deciding which potential respondent samples to survey, prominence was given to those stakeholder groups which were perceived to be functioning most actively upon, within and around the subjects' school lives, including their curriculum choice making and that of their teachers.

The stakeholder groups identified for the questionnaires were:

- *Taxpayers,*
- *Employers,*
- *Teachers,*
- *Parents* and
- *Administrators,*
- *Carers/community agents,*
- *Students (able peers),*
- *MID students*

MID students were not administered the questionnaire. Its necessarily dense 'readability' and format made it unsuitable for gaining their perceptions and preferences. Instead the same issues were raised with them through interviews. Nevertheless, they are identified as a stakeholder group in items of the Questionnaire which explored the relative 'influence' of stakeholder groups upon the education of MID students. Overall the students themselves are taken to be the most central stakeholders in the study.

The choice of *Taxpayers* as a category may not appear to have any direct ecological connection to the subjects. This group's inclusion grew from a curiosity to know how the most distal and seemingly 'disinterested' people viewed curriculum for the largest disabled group in the community (despite approximately one third of their taxes being spent in the education area). Data from taxpayers might evince (though not establish) a difference between a role-identified perspective on curriculum deliberation such as that of teachers, and the 'man-in-the-street's' relatively distal perspective.

Description of the Stakeholder samples

The *Taxpayers* solicited were a 'sample of convenience': the first ten male and ten female persons on the street who agreed to complete the questionnaire. They were not known to the researcher. No specifically rural 'taxpayers' were approached but the provincial nature of Launceston (and its business district) could be argued to contain sufficient rural-based shoppers for the distinction to be unnecessary.

The participation of *Administrators* was sought directly through meetings and seminars at a principal and curriculum officer level or above. Half were out-of-region and half within-region. The focal subjects were not known personally to any but one of them, although this 'distance' was not a strict criteria applied to the selection of administrators. Questionnaires were distributed to ten administrators.

Employers' for this first questionnaire were randomly selected on a 'first-up' alphabetical basis and coded out to five each of service, industrial and rural.
Fifteen employers were drawn from the 003 telephone zone.

The *Teachers* and *Community Agents/Carers* to whom the questionnaire was distributed operated within the direct field of contact or 'mesosystem' in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) schema, of at least one of the six focal students. Ten *primary school teachers* were selected as a sample of opportunity across three schools involved in integration of MID students, with 15 *secondary classroom teachers* drawn similarly from two urban and one rural high school.

Community agents', 20 in all , were selected also by 'opportunity'. Each provided services to MID students, among others, in schools and non-school centres across the 003 telephone region. These included guidance officers, social workers, social trainers, health workers and advocates.

'Students' (able peers) to whom the questionnaire was distributed were 10 regular school peers without described disabilities. The two schools which those students attended, one a District High School and the other an urban High School, had at least one MID peer fully enrolled. While the able peers were not identified originally as key or important stakeholders, their inclusion came about fortuitously, as a result of high school contacts by the researcher while observing the subjects and from initial interviews with students and teachers. Curriculum delivery logistics indicated that peers had some influence on choice and upon provision, as a 'critical mass' was necessary to justify the offering of some courses.

Four respondents identified themselves as "other" than the given stakeholder categories. These 'friends', 'relatives' and 'aides' were included as having constituted part of the human 'ecosystem' of the focal and other MID students.

Distribution and collection of the Questionnaire to Stakeholders

The questionnaires were delivered by hand to potential urban respondents, except for employers not 'in' at the time. Questionnaires were mailed to rural stakeholders. Completed questionnaires were in large collected directly from the work-sites or schools. Few reminder notes to participants were needed.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to administer the Stakeholder Questionnaire to peers of the focal subjects was obtained from the students' parents/guardians, in accordance with the ethical conditions detailed by the University of Tasmania's relevant committees. Permission was also

obtained from Tasmanian Department of Education and the Arts to conduct the research with staff of schools, where applicable.

(b) **Questionnaire to Employers** (Appendix II)

Design

This instrument sought to ascertain employers' perceptions regarding preparation of MID students for the world of work. Some sections pertain to the broader secondary student population. Projections regarding relative emphases of curricular domains were also canvassed.

The Questionnaire to Employers was not originally planned as a separate element of the study. It arose out of the poor response rate (20 percent) from employers to the broader stakeholder questionnaire. This study is not the only one concerned with disabled persons to have received a poor response rate from employers. Dempsey & Small (1992) conducted a NSW study which yielded a 17 percent response rate from general employers, while sheltered workshop employers had delivered a 55 percent response rate (p.56).

Rather than carry a 'gap' in the ecological make up of the data, a second questionnaire was designed, specifically for open employers. To avoid 'contaminating' the data of the original Questionnaire to Stakeholders (Appendix I) with identical items, some different information was sought which might either corroborate or challenge findings from this or other studies regarding employers, MID students and the students' work-related curriculum in general.

The imperative expressed in the literature for the national and equity values of work-related skills is interpreted for MID students through data from employers. An extensive US employer survey by Carson et al. (1991), cited by Berliner (1992), provided an 'item bank' of employee characteristics to be 'ranked' by employers. Comparisons were made of rankings attributed to various outcomes in the US study and in this employer survey.

The readiness of employers to engage MID students in a range of work experience and work placement programs was also probed. From the data, feasibility has been gauged for balancing other domains against increased student engagement in the pre-vocational domain. Proportions of 'willing' employers are expressed by subgroup means and tabled as percentages to profile the array of several options.

The Sample: (Respondents to Questionnaire to Employers)

A representative spread of businesses was selected by interval (every 15th business from the 003 Yellow Pages) along with public service employers. These were balanced in number by progressive discard to generate proportionate groups across three dimensions of *size* (large, medium and small payrolls), *type* (service, manufacturing, primary), and *location* (rural, urban, local and out-of-region.) The letters were addressed to 'the Manager' and covering notes to the Questionnaire similarly addressed the task 'to be completed by managing personnel'. The data hence reflect the opinions of those positioned to 'take on' students for work experience or to employ them. Ninety employer questionnaires were distributed with postage-paid return addressed enveloped included.

2. Interviews

Interviews with (a) focal students and (b) their parents.

Semi-structured interviews were held at intervals with two groups of stakeholders: the students themselves and, separately, their parents. The initial interview was held before the students had made either the transition to high school (i.e., Grade 6 to Grade 7) or from Grade 8 (pre-Tasmanian Certificate of Education) to Grade 9 (TCE).

Follow-up interviews were held more recently as the final data gathering activity, some two years after those transitions had been made. Except in the case of a sole-parent household, generally both parents were interviewed together.

One notable constraint met was the literacy difficulties of some of the parents. Interviewing was by far the most effective 'evaluative' means for gathering data from them and their children. On most occasions the parents preferred not to have their children present during the interviews. This made arranging interviews a little harder, given that students' fathers were usually home at the same 'after hours' as them. Benefits were clear in the more candid 'data' given by both parties.

The Student and Parent interviews were semi-structured (schedules are given in Appendices III & IV) utilising a considerable number of stem and probe questions. These explored views and experiences of preferred and non-preferred curriculum content and outcomes. Dimensions of time (including changes and futures), settings, learning styles and independence were addressed. In order to maintain a supportive, rather than divisive approach, the parents were addressed as a 'couple' with the opportunity for

individual or mutual commentary from both parents. There were few occasions where points of view differed significantly. This 'solidarity' was not surprising given the large number of times families had been involved in school and case conferences around their child's placement, funding and management. It should be acknowledged, therefore, that the opportunity to gain individual parents perceptions was, to an indeterminate extent, somewhat limited by the decision to interview both parents together.

Sample of Parents in the Study

In the first round, those interviewed were the parents of the MID focal students, comprising five couples and one sole parent. In the second round of interviews, it was not possible to engage one of the sets of parents, hence four couples and one child's mother were interviewed.

(c) Teacher interviews

Given that there were different staff responsible for the target students at early and late stages of the research, an 'opportunity' sample of the students' various teachers was interviewed on one occasion each. Appendix V gives the questioning plan used in the teacher interviews.

Sample of Teachers in the Study

An average of two teachers per focal student were interviewed, (a total of eleven teachers) which included two support teachers and two non-school teachers (from the Launceston Student Workshop). Many more informal contacts over the research period were recorded in field notes.

Launceston Student Workshop (LSW)

This is a workplace for training, made available to students from the age of 14 to 16 years who are not benefiting from their regular school program and who are nominated by their school as being at-risk of serious social isolation from the school and community. Wood and metal products are produced for sale at the workshop/factory, with the work done by the trainees being supervised by tradespeople. The enterprise is to a large extent self-funding, and operates as a business in its own right, with all of the expected ordering, production and marketing facets of a small factory. Tasks are rotated and processes are followed through in both the metal and wood sections. Two groups of around fourteen students rotate on a week on, week off basis, with their alternate week spent in their base

school. Roughly two thirds of the students were from regular high schools. Some travelled considerable distances at early hours in order to meet the self-management conditions of program involvement. Industrial working hours are kept at the workshop, on average one and a half hours longer than a school day. All participants must make their own way to and from the workshop via public transport. Four of the study's six target students had been involved with the facility. *simulation.*

Procedures

The teacher interviews were more openly structured than the student or parent interviews. Responses were able to develop from several stem questions. These questions centred on (i) the range of options available, domain emphases in certain subjects, curriculum as a component of a 'supportive school environment' and (ii) the effectiveness of certain learning options available to MID students.

Teachers interviewed were also asked to complete an 'exercise' which required them to discern the prevalent emphases given by teachers to curriculum domains in subjects undertaken in their schools by the MID target students (Appendix VI).

The interviews with teachers have also been supplemented by data recorded from a professional development session conducted with over 30 teachers during the research period. The session involved the majority of teachers interviewed previously. It reports a brainstorm focussed on the curriculum needs of educationally at-risk special needs students at secondary schools in the District from which the target students were drawn for this study.

3. Locus of Control Assessment (Appendix VII)

The intention behind using this instrument was to explore changes in the level of students' own responsibility for learning which may result from curriculum changes during the study period. This involved establishing for each student a baseline of "Locus of Control" (a measure of how *internally* or *other-directed* the person's response to learning events was), with a follow-up assessment at the completion of the study period. Using an instrument delivered orally, designed specifically for intellectually disabled students (Knight, 1992), the 'pre-tests' were conducted with four students who agreed to participate. However, follow-ups could only be conducted with the three youngest students, as the eldest participating student had left school at the time of the follow-up tests. Knight's LOC test items are all school-related, hence a second administering of the test was relevant only to the younger three students. This defeated any chance in the study of comparing the effects of primary/high and pre-TCE/post TCE

curriculum changes. While the tests were completed with the three younger students, the data did not generate any significant bases for inter-subject comparisons or statistical relationships between Locus of Control and curriculum changes. Thus, although data has been collected (and recorded in Appendix VI), no useable results were derived from the data in response to the project's research questions.

Sample of students in the Locus of Control assessment:

Four of the focal students agreed to respond to the sequence of 40 items. One of those students left school before a follow-up assessment could be achieved. Three students were tested at two to two and a half year intervals.

Procedure: Instrument items were delivered orally, with students 'choosing' orally the first or second of alternative motivations or responses put to them (and by ticking *a.* or *b.* on a numbered sheet of potential responses). Comments were also recorded by the researcher. An identical follow up assessment was attempted late in the study to identify effects which might be attributable to program changes experienced by the students.

Data analysis approaches

Treatment of the qualitative data

The first results considered were qualitative data from the interviews. These were coded into concept bins generated through a matrix of two key dimensions in the study's conceptual framework and methodology. These were

i) the *three proximal stakeholder groups* interviewed, i.e., the focus MID students, their parents and their teachers.

ii) the *three curriculum elements* of content, outcomes and processes. Content and outcomes were further sorted (or subdivided) into the four curriculum domains of: Academic Skills; Life Skills; Social Skills; and, Pre-vocational Skills. Processes were assigned five further 'bins': contextual; planning; materials selection; instruction; and assessment.

In order to assign the interview data to the matrix, it was first necessary to encapsulate responses as single words or phrases that succinctly represented interviewees' opinions. Once this data was allocated to cells of the matrix, it was possible to describe MID students' curriculum needs in two ways: first, in terms of the skills and processes stated by proximal stakeholders as being valued for MID students' curriculums (including the statements from the focal students themselves); and, second, an amount of agreement

that existed across the proximal stakeholder groups with regard to the three curriculum elements. The matrix describes the *range* of MID students' needs across the four curriculum domains while also indicating the *intensity and consistency* of those 'needs' (across the perceptions of stakeholders interviewed).

The matrix's stakeholder groupings and the curriculum elements of outcomes and content were inherent in the design of the interview schedules and, subsequently, the questionnaire design. However, the 'concept bins' relating to curriculum processes emerged from the data as it was being analysed. Hence the conceptual framework of the study was responsive to the data or, more particularly, to the respondents who provided it.

Treatment of the Quantitative data

The questionnaires sought the opinions, perceptions and preferences of respondents. The majority of responses sought were ratings on a five-point scale and rankings across several items. In some instances, responses to open ended probes followed a ranking question. These have been either coded and counted, or interpreted within the narrative of the results.

An initial treatment of the questionnaire data for Kurtosis and Skewness (Levin, 1987; *Statview,* 1992) showed that parametric analysis would not be suitable. While the overall number of 72 respondents was sufficient to analyse through non-parametric means, the relatively small, and in some cases uneven, sizes of the stakeholder group samples indicated that simple percentages, medians and, in some cases, modal ratings and rankings would be the most appropriate way to interpret the data.

There are several sets of data in the study that have received quantitative treatments. Because the *Results* have been organised around the specific research questions, it may be useful here to conclude the chapter by explaining the treatment of the data as it has been applied in turn to each of the research questions.

Research Question 1.

What are the curriculum needs of adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

- The data from the Questionnaire to Stakeholders have been analysed first as these pertain across the six target students. The percentages of all 72 respondent stakeholders'

"importance ratings" are tabled for each curriculum *Content* and *Outcomes* item. The criterion used is that the item should receive a rating above the central tendency (i.e., above a rating of 3 on a five point scale, and for this questionnaire, a rating for the curriculum item of "fairly important" or "very important").

- Stakeholders' preferences from the Stakeholder Questionnaire regarding who should have most influence in MID students' educations (ranking the various stakeholder groups) and their opinions of various stages of schooling are compared for rankings with results compiled from similar items the Employer Questionnaire. Rankings data have been reported at face value, with simple percentages in some cases accompanying the rankings to profile the differences between stakeholder groups and to indicate their respective prioritising of curriculum elements.

Research Question 2.

Are the curriculum recommendations of proximal stakeholders consistent with those of more distal stakeholders?

- Levels of concurrence have been investigated between two sets of tabulations. The first comprises mean percentages of "importance ratings" using the total responses from each Stakeholder group for items of Content and Outcomes in the vignetted MID students' curriculums . "Importance" has been denoted by a rating greater than the central rating of 3 on a five point scale. The consistency of ratings across the seven listed stakeholder groups has been ascertained. Criterial to concordance or agreement is the spread of 'importance' percentages within curriculum options across the groups. For the same data, a rule-of-thumb has been applied to the importance ratings: on items where 60 percent or more of stakeholders give consistent ratings above the central rating, the item has been considered 'needed' for MID adolescents' curriculums. As some items attracted ratings of importance from 100 percent of respondents, the analysis has been able to go beyond simple denotation of items' importance. The relative percentages allow prioritising of the curriculum content and outcomes items investigated in the study.

- This process is repeated in less detail for individual student data. Median figures have been used for each item, by stakeholder group. The tabulated data present a profile for each student of Stakeholders groups' recommendations (by rating) regarding curriculum items. These data occupy considerable space and, as they are not directly pertinent to the particular research questions chosen for this study, the tables of individual target student data are presented in Appendix VIII. Nevertheless, certain

patterns and trends are evident in that data and contribute in some measure to the identification and prioritising of students' curriculum needs.

Research Question 3.

Can an appropriate mix of curriculum domains be determined for MID students?

- Items in the second section of the Questionnaire to Stakeholders and in the Employer Questionnaire refer to the time allocations considered by respondents to be optimal for the four curriculum domain categories. These data are analysed as mean hours. The 'preferred' proportions of time allocated to four curriculum domains are then contrasted with the 'actual' (though still *estimated*) proportions in school curriculums of the MID focal students. The resultant discrepancies in preferred from actual time-on-domain (particularly *non*--academic learning time) are the bases for curriculum adjustments recommended from the study.

Research Question 4.

What adjustments are indicated to make the curriculum more appropriate for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?.

The data from teachers' estimations of curriculum domain emphases are extrapolated to the regular secondary Grade 9 timetable of one of the target students. From this timetable, typical of the provisions offered to integrated MID adolescents, comparisons of an actual-to-preferred nature are made with stakeholders' (in particular, Employers') recommendations for an appropriate mix of curriculum domains. These adjustments are quantified in terms of time to give a comparative basis to the question's 'answer'. The fourth research question is taken further in the *Discussion* chapter. There it is addressed by a synthesis of the results from several of the data gathering methods, and both the qualitative and quantitative treatments of the data. The study's implications and recommendations represent a response to the overarching question of what adjustments or changes are appropriate to meet MID students' curriculum needs.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter reports the results as they relate to each of the study's research questions. Data from some sections of the questionnaires and interviews are directed to more than one research question.

To make clearer the several applications of the data gathering methods, Figure 4.1 of the following page shows how each method pertains to the four research questions. Figure 4.1 indicates whether the particular technique used has data of 'major relevance' or 'some relevance' to the question. Although data were collected using the Locus of Control test (Knight, 1992), these did not inform the research questions concerning either needs or directions for change (see p. 67). As there are no 'results' to report from the incomplete data, the method is not included in Figure 4.1. The figure signals the triangulations inherent in the research design.

This chapter first presents the data from interviews with the proximal stakeholders, (i.e., students, parents and teachers) with the primary focus being to describe and explain the major curriculum needs of the students. Data of a more quantitative nature from the two questionnaires, the first to stakeholders, and the second to employers, are also directed to the first question which addresses MID students' curriculum 'needs'.

The second research question concerning consistency across stakeholders' prioritising of curriculum elements is approached largely through the two questionnaires' data, with some concurrences noted also from the interview data.

The last two questions concern balance in the curriculum and any changes indicated by the results towards achieving a more appropriate curriculum for MID adolescents. Data informing these more interpretive questions are drawn from both the questionnaires and the interviews. The question of "what adjustments are indicated?" leads logically into Chapter Five, the *Discussion,* where it is addressed in terms of theoretical and practical implications of the results.

Fig. 4.1 Applications of the data gathering techniques to the several research questions

Research Questions	Data Gathering Methods		
	Interviews with Students, Parents and Teachers	Questionnaire to Stakeholders	Questionnaire to Employers
1. *What are the curriculum needs of MID adolescents?*	1	1	2
2. *Are the curriculum recommendations of proximal stakeholders consistent with those of more distal stakeholders?*	1	1	1
3. *Can an appropriate mix of curriculum domains be determined for MID students?*	2	1	1
4. *What adjustments are indicated to make the curriculum more appropriate for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?*	1	2	2
Key: 1 = of major relevance 2= of some relevance			

Data for Research Question 1:

What are the curriculum needs of adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

The main data applicable to this question are from the interviews and from the Questionnaire to Stakeholders, with some relevant having come from,the Questionnaire to Employers. While the questionnaires offer the wider stakeholder perspective, the interviews inform the study about the intrinsic value of certain curriculums to the students' immediate lives.

Interviews

The Interviews with the two most proximal groups of stakeholders, i.e. the target students and their parents, are reported first in a narrative form. In order to better contextualise interviewees' statements, they have been embedded in commentary which explains the personal and educational circumstances at the time. Most of this information was given by the family or individual during interview but some of the background data came from teachers interviewed and from support personnel dealing with the individuals as part of their caseload.

The responses of the third most proximal group, teachers, have been reported under the semi-structured questions used. Teachers' perceptions were also gathered from a group professional development session conducted in November 1993 which involved most of the interviewed teachers (along with several others).

One further source of data has been reported as an adjunct to the interview data. Teachers interviewed were asked for their estimations of the various emphases given in their schools' curriculums to the domains of Academic Skills, Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills. Because the question required a great deal more deliberation than was possible in an interview situation, it was presented as a take-away exercise for each teacher to complete in their own time. The data from this technique are reported in respect of the third research question concerning an appropriate curriculum domain 'mix' for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities.

Interviews with staff of the non-school educational facility, Launceston Student Workshop (attended by several of the MID students), are reported in a narrative form to help link the contexts of school and non-school to the students' experiences.

Following the narrative reporting of the Student and Parent interviews and the interviews with Teachers, the data is coded (see Table 1, p. 103 and Table 2, p. 104) in a matrix which addresses each research question. The tables provide a basis for more ready comparison of the qualitative interview data with the more quantitative "needs" data from the two questionnaires.

a) Interviews With Students

1. PAUL

First Interview (Age 12. 9, Gr. 6) Feb. 1992

Interviewed in his home, within earshot of his parents, Paul was quite hazy on his earlier experiences of schooling, having difficulty even remembering which schools he had attended. He was, however, glad to have enrolled at (special school) *because there are more kids I can play with here and I've got friends.* He was enjoying woodwork and science: *Mum and Dad like the things I make.* At his previous (regular) school, Paul had been asked to do *some easy stuff* which was much the same as the other students were doing. It took Paul *heaps longer to do.* Consequently he *didn't get to finish much.*

Paul had little opportunity to make decisions about his learning program, aside from complying or not. This did not seem to be a problem for him. He was not asked to do homework. At home he enjoyed using the computer games and caring for his show-breeding animals.

Paul had little if any awareness of employment preparation as a purpose of schooling. He wanted to drive trucks like his father, or at least be an offsider for his Dad. Paul had no understanding of the difficulties inherent in being an epileptic and, at that stage, having no functional literacy. He wanted to leave school *as early as [he] could*, but had no ideas what he might do if truck driving did not eventuate.

Paul: Second Interview (Age 15. 0, Gr. 8) May 1994

Paul had been involved for a year at the Launceston Student Workshop, spending alternate school weeks at his special school and at the Workshop. He had been quite successful at the workshop and showed considerable confidence within that environment. The second interview took place at the Workshop, approximately two years after the first interview.

Paul was satisfied with both his Special School and his Workshop programs. He was *not interested in going to [the local high school]* because of *harder work there and kids teasing.*There were *smaller classes* at special school. There was a level of adult imprint in his conversation, as in his unsolicited statement that *they shouldn't get rid of*

special schools because they can help if kids don't know stuff. Probed about what sort of stuff, Paul remarked, *Maths and Language and Spelling.*

Paul had no real understanding of the TCE courses, nor the TCE structure. He knew only that he was doing Metalwork and Wood Design. He was not aware of any co-ordinated effort to approach TCE courses from both his special school and the Workshop. Asked what he'd have to show after the year, he replied *My record book [i.e., Record of Achievement].* He had no thoughts to venture regarding Secondary College as an option. This had not been discussed with him by his parents but he felt that they wouldn't want him to go there. He claimed, *They've had enough of me and school.* Asked what balance school should have of fun and getting ready for after leaving school, he replied that school was for *equal parts of fun and learning, but there should be more sport.*

The 'area' in which Paul perceived he needed most work was his Social Skills. He knew he needed *to work harder to get to know the person.* He'd had a girlfriend through the year, and that hadn't *got anywhere.* Consequently he was *more interested in work than girls.* Though he was not sure of any options after school and the Student Workshop, Paul was intending to *get a job... bakery work or gardening work.* His parents were *helping [him] to find a job and talking with bosses.* Asked what advice he would give to others with his sorts of needs, Paul said, *I'd say 'just have a go'.*

2. MEGAN

First Interview (Age 11.7, Gr. 7) Feb. 1992

Megan was very difficult to interview, presenting as more shy than she would be normally. The interview was conducted in the lounge room of her home, with her parents and siblings going about their activities in other parts of the house.

She had enjoyed her (regular) primary school very much, although she found the last year *too hard to keep up with.* It had been her choice not to go on to high school with her peers *because I'd have been getting behind all the time and they don't do the stuff Mrs. [Teachers' Assistant] does with us [the Life Skills group].* She thought she would only be going to (special) school for a short while until she could *know books better and just have things I can do good at.*

School was not seen by Megan as preparation for later life. Rather *you get good enough at things and then do harder stuff at high school.* She could, when probed on

the matter, see that some of the things she was learning in Home Economics were *good for doing if I have to do it myself.* She liked her current young (male) teacher and was encouraged by his suggestion that she *do a modelling course or something.*

Megan: Second Interview (Age 13.5, Gr. 8) Oct. 1993

The second interview was conducted in Megan's home, some eighteen months after the first. Megan had just turned down the possibility of full time enrolment at regular high school, preferring to *take it slowly,* which meant partial integration at a rate of a day per week, increasing through the year. Megan was still shy regarding her ability to *work as fast as the others* but she felt she was *reading OK now with just a bit of help from [her teacher at her Special School].* (Her teacher, incidentally, remarked in interview that Megan's literacy skills were not sufficiently strong to allow her unsupported use of any of the Grade 8 materials which she would meet under full integration).
Megan felt her personal coping skills were growing, especially after having spent some considerable time attending the Launceston Student Workshop (LSW). Significantly she had been one of its few female students over its several years. Although the Workshop staff had been very pleased with her progress, Megan had found the Workshop regimen *too tiring doing jobs for a long time at a time.* She had *stayed away, like I was sick but I wasn't sick for a doctor... just sick of it if you know what I mean... I couldn't face being so tired every day.* Her parents had actually intervened to see whether or not things could be re-organised. Although the LSW staff had become aware of the problem, and were actively attempting to *keep all doors open* the unintended aversion Megan had experienced was too great to be overcome. She had not returned to the program.

Megan had no real idea" of her work aspirations, but thought that *after [she had] been to high school for a while [she] would have a go at something.* Probed as to whether she felt she was ready to do some Work experience Megan stated *I'd like to try in a dress shop or something so I can see what there is to do... I can measure all right and do some sewing and things.*

Asked about the TCE, Megan was very vague as to its purpose and meaning. She thought in terms of *reports* which were *OK because Dad and Mum put them in my folder [her Record of Achievement] so I've got them to show.* Megan had several ROAs in the form of display books carefully shelved in the family's bookcase at home. Replying to a probe regarding what she might use to show an employer when she went for a job, Megan replied *I might show them bits from my folders [ROAs] like the swimming certificates and pictures of my workshop things [projects].*

3. ANGELO

First Interview (Age 13.0, Gr. 7) Feb. 1992

This interview took place at Angelo's high school, during the lunchtime break.

When asked what he thought teachers at school "wanted him to learn for", Angelo replied, *So that they don't have to give me more work* [Angelo clarified this to mean activities different to the ordinary classroom offering]. In reply to the question "why do *you* want to learn things ?" he ventured *So that I can show people I've learned it.* Further questioned regarding "Who cares most about want you learn?" Angelo indicated that his parents argued a lot in front of him about whether he was *wasting time at school* and whether he was *being lazy or not listening.* They had *kept moving [him] to other schools where [he] would get more work*. He reflected, *They [parents] give me homework all the time ... Dad gives me extra learning practice to catch up. And I get jobs like my bedroom and the garbage and doing the floors.*

Angelo had no interest at all in post-school options, nor had he any real knowledge of those options. Angelo was not looking forward to the coming years at High school. He thought he might like to do more woodwork. Reading was his most favoured learning activity. He had no friends he could name.

Angelo: Second Interview (Age 15. 3, Gr. 9) May 1994

Angelo was a much more mature person than the boy interviewed over two years ago. He had a definite self awareness that was not evident previously. He was now at the Launceston Student Workshop, having transferred from special school to a local high school, though not back to his previous high school. He had *shifted out of his family during the week* and went *home just on the weekends.* This arrangement was more for emotional reasons, largely *to stop arguing* than for work or school reasons.

Angelo had some strong criticisms of both his regular high schools. He had been called a *jerk* at his first, and had not been able to make much more headway with peers at the second high school. The *main thing* he did in his alternate high school week, i.e., not at the LSW, was to *hang around with myself* (sic). There was still teasing and the *week on, week off* aspect to workshop involvement was *part of the problem.* He had *asked Mrs. B [Guidance Officer] to help find a friend but she was too busy.* He'd had *more friends at primary school.* Things had just *gone downhill* at high school. Friendships were much easier to find and keep at the Workshop. Asked why, Angelo replied that there were *more of people the same as me* there.

His favourite subjects at high school were cooking and maths. [While cooking was integrated, maths was a modified syllabus, Maths for Living, managed by a resource unit teacher]. At special school he had been able to *learn more.* To his mind there were *too many people* in the ordinary classroom at high school. Angelo ventured some unsolicited advice for teachers at high school: *If they are not going to have small classes, they should help the slow ones first and then the better ones, otherwise you just muck up and don't know what's going on.* Schools should also *have lunchtime help and after school help especially for Workshop kids who miss out on things.* School was a place where you should *learn all the time,* and it was a *waste of time* to do anything else. Asked if he was really serious about doing lessons at lunch times, Angelo said he was. [The remark could be put in perspective by the fact that Angelo spent most of his high school break times *with himself*]. He felt he *learned better away from school.* He was not at all interested in going to Secondary College. He had deliberately not investigated the possibilities. He didn't know what the TCE record was or looked like, nor how the TCE structure itself operated. However, he was aware of *doing Industrial Wood and Metal courses at the Workshop [LSW].* These, he assumed were *part of the things you have to do to keep working there.* He had kept his ROAs from Special School and thought they were *pretty good, pretty cool.* He would like something similar form his high school time but that was not likely in his eyes *because no-one' talks to me about collecting stuff like they did before [at Special School].*

The Workshop staff were helping him to find a job, now that he was approaching sixteen. He wanted to live in a flat by himself or with a friend and felt he could *cook OK and do showers and washing* and he was *good with money.* The *main thing [he needed] to learn is about getting on with other people and making friends.* Asked what strategies he might use Angelo could not bring any to mind.

Having considered what he would like to say to people who would read my report of the interviews, Angelo remarked, *I'd tell them to have smaller classes.*

4. SALLY

First interview (Age 14. 11, Gr.8) Feb. 1992

Sally was, at the time of this first interview, about to be integrated from her special school of five years, into a local high school. Interviewed at (special) school, she was also at that time subject and witness to a domestic violence charge that was being dealt with in a criminal court. This had changed her generally outgoing nature to a more cautious and uncertain presentation. Nevertheless, she had a very positive opinion of her schooling at (special) school. When asked what were some of the things she had most enjoyed learning, Sally replied simply, *Playing recorder and doing the lathe.*

[Wood turning lathes have been withdrawn from use in the state's special schools since the time of the interview].

Sally was, despite her domestic difficulties, looking forward to going to high school: *I've got a couple of friends there and there's cooking and they said I could learn clarinet in a band.* Sally was asked how much help she would need at high school, to which she responded *I don't know, just with reading and stuff.* To a question concerning her post-school aspirations, Sally stated emphatically that she wanted to leave school as early as she could. Her intention was to join a sheltered workshop in which some of her older friends were working.

Sally: Second Interview (Age 17.1, Employed) April 1994.

Sally, by the time of the second interview, had left school slightly *ahead of time,* actually two months earlier than the end of Grade 10. She had secured a part time job as a vegetable preparer and pasta cook in a fast food chain outlet. Living with a young female nurse in a flat near to her workplace, she had begun to think she might like to work in the nursing area and believed she had the capacity to do so. Her self-belief was impressive. Child-care was another interest for her but she felt that it was *too hard to get in* if you'd had a poor school record. Sally was asked what sorts of things were good or poor at high school in preparing her for adulthood. She said that going to regular high school had taught her *not to act so tough as you think you are.* That was a beginning to making better friends for her.

She was disappointed with the level of work experience available to her during her schooling, *only a bit in my last year,* and thought that the weekend work that she had picked up herself [mainly with newsagents] had been better. She felt students needed *heaps more* than the one week she had been offered. Sally returned consistently to a remark about being *'your own best friend' : I taught myself* and *I set myself to it.* Asked what advice she would give to others who come from special education programs, Sally said *I'd just tell them, get to it, go, you can do it.*

5. PETER

First Interview (Age 14. 5, Gr.8) June 1992

Interviewed during a lunch break at high school, Peter had a negative attitude to teachers and subjects at his [regular] high school. Although two years earlier Peter had been most reluctant to go with his special school's decision to integrate him into a local secondary school, Peter now expressed a preference for being amongst regular peers.

Asked what the difference was between being in [special] primary school and high school, Peter replied: *The teachers don't do much for you here [high school] and they just think you're an idiot... I've got some friends here who are all right and lunchtimes and things. They don't act dumb. The girls I know are OK.*

Asked if he had any of his previous ROAs he recalled only that he had taken out *two pictures of a chest of drawers and a treasure chest and gave them to my Dad. I don't know what happened to the rest.*

Peter had no plans following school. Asked why he had not managed to stay on beyond the initial days at the Launceston Student Workshop, he claimed *They don't listen to you, just tell you what to do and I couldn't stand them.* Peter had no response to a question regarding what school was going to give him for his later life. *I'm wasting my time doing stuff I can't do. I don't go to most of the classes anyway.*

Peter: Second Interview (Age 16. 1, unemployed) Feb. 1994.

Peter, (now 16 years old) had been unemployed for several months since abandoning school before he turned fifteen. [In Tasmania it is allowable for students with eligibility for a disability pension to leave school at fifteen, rather than sixteen as it is for most students]. He was living with a household of similarly placed youths. He had a girlfriend who was in part time employment and saving. Together the household's lifestyle was *good.* Peter claimed *We can buy just about whatever we want and we've got the video and all. I do most of the cooking 'cos the others never learned how, or they say so. I get to cook what I want anyhow.*

Peter *never saw* his TCE Certificate (transcript/record). Asked what it might have shown, he replied *nothing much except Woodwork and some Maths for dongheads.* He claimed to still have *photos of the jobs [he'd] done at [special school].* His mother confided that there was some internal family "dispute" over the chest of drawers that Peter had constructed in his last year of primary [special] schooling. Peter had used the location of 'his' drawers as something of a statement about where his allegiances lay.

Peter remarked that *School is a stuff-up. You only learn what they say you gotta do and half the time they can't show you how it makes sense. I learn more now without school, just doing things.* Asked whether Adult Education literacy courses were useful, Peter replied *Unemployment [CES] made me do a course and it was better than school but it got too heavy for me and I had to find somewhere else to live.* [Peter, following a police arrest, had informed on a drug dealing ring that had *got [him] in.*

This had caused him to be a marked man in their eyes, and after several bashings, he had shifted elsewhere in the state.] Peter could make no projections about his future. He was keeping up contact with his mother, visiting at regular intervals and for special occasions like his Mother's birthday [it was in fact his Mother's birthday that brought him within 'interviewing range' for me this time].

6. KEITH

First Interview (Age 15. 2, Gr.9) Feb. 1992

Keith was interviewed at home, after school, with his parents attending. He had always been in ordinary, local rural schools, and had no concept of alternatives. He was, however, aware of the Launceston Student Workshop. Asked how he might deal with the distance to town if he was imagining going there at some stage, Keith replied that he might stay with his Granny near to the Workshop and go home on the weekends. Was he happy with that idea? *Dunno. I go to town sometimes but I don't like it very much. I suppose I could.*

Asked "What is the point of school?" Keith had no clear answers. To his mind, he had not *got much out of school.* Asked what he would have liked to learn, Keith replied, *I could have learned more spelling and stuff but they never thought I could do it. They think cooking is better for you. I done the driving [education] myself and I learnt to fix cars* [by himself, though in fact with his father].

Keith: Second Interview (Age 17. 5, Employed in family business) March 1994

Keith was obviously more confident in himself, joking about his aspirations to become a *loggie or a dump truck driver.* He knew precisely how many years it would take to become eligible for such licences. He was *selling a vehicle or two to get a [road] bike and go on long trips.* [He had also sold his beloved drum kit]. Keith told of his love of golf, which turned out to be a 'solo' affair. He would only go out to the course by himself. Being a left-hander, and with no other family members owning clubs, it had been hard to branch out into even family partners for a game. To counter this, Keith had, of his own accord, purchased a right hand club for his family each time he'd been in 'town'. His mother was later to allude to this as evidence of a solid level of concern on Keith's part for others, particularly his family.

Keith mentioned one teacher in particular for whom he had the utmost respect. She still visited him and he returned gesture for gesture with such gifts as photographs. He was

emphatic that woodwork had been the only subject, apart from the slightly lesser-loved technical drawing, that had been *any use or fun at all.* He still remembered this *cooking teacher who told [him he] was stupid.* He had no training or further education plans for the future apart from *studying* for his truck licence test. *

b) Interviews with Parents

First Interviews with Parents.

Some of the data gathered in this section has formed the basis of the short case histories presented as stimulus for the Questionnaire to Stakeholders. It is not intended to repeat that background data. The major reporting emphasis here is upon two aspects; first, the orientations perceived by parents in their children to their learning programs and, second, parents' perceptions of the relative value of their children's schooling to a projected (and, if possible, describable) future. The nature of the child's school experiences in special, regular and alternative contexts was probed. Positive or useful curricular experiences were sought as well as negative and 'wasteful' content or outcomes. The interview schedule is shown in Appendix IV.

Second Parent Interviews

The second set of interviews was spread over a longer period than the first, largely because of the changed school-cluster allocations on the researcher's part. This altered school round reduced the previously ready access to the focal students and to some similar extent their families. The span between interviews ranged from about two and a half to three years. The major object of the second interviews was to explore any changes in the student or in the student's performance which might be attributed to curricular undertakings in the period since the first interview (or following the transition from one level of schooling to the other). Future aspirations or expectations were probed, along with the parents' knowledge and preferences regarding school and curricular records for their child. The interviews probed the inclination or otherwise of parents to encourage their children to undertake post-compulsory education.

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*Note: While Keith's experiences appear to indicate a higher cognitive/adaptive functioning than the MID "category" might suggest, it is interesting to reflect that Keith's WISC-R score as recorded by Guidance was the *lowest* of all six described students.

1. PAUL'S PARENTS

First Interview **Nov. 1991**

Paul's parents described him as *well below his age norm* as a student. They attributed this to Paul's epilepsy, which had been diagnosed at the age of four or five. There was no familial pattern of school difficulty, nor had they any problems with helping Paul with reading or homework. The greatest difficulty was that Paul's younger brother was *easily better at his school work than [Paul].*

Peer acceptance had been best at his special school, after a number of unsuccessful primary school experiences. He had been *clinically* diagnosed as having *separation anxiety,* which, while improving, still caused him to have difficulty *even going out of sight of the house's chimney.* A major factor inhibiting Paul's inclusion in a regular school, according to his parents, was the size of schools. Beyond a certain size, *schools caused Paul to lose what security he had.* The most successful regular school he had attended was the smallest of his schools [80 students] and his current [special] school was also *suitably small [54 students] for him.*

Paul's Records of Achievement were highly valued. His school *sent one home each year with all the special things and projects he'd been making, photos and certificates like going swimming in St. Giles' deep end.* The *School report book [ROA]* reflected Paul's pet breeding and showing activities. His parents were *not worrying about his ordinary [traditional] school report.* They didn't know *what the best sort of feedback* would be from schools, but *because his [special] school [was] so small, the information gets through.*

The most important thing school could offer Paul now was *six years of steady state.* This was what his parents were expecting from his present [special] school. High School was recognised by them as being the most difficult stage. The best outcome for Paul would be a *good work ethic.* Ideally, for them, Paul would be best served by a post-school life of *working from home.* They had not contemplated seriously the possibility of Paul's independence from the family home.

Second Interview **June 1994**

[This interview was conducted with Paul's mother only].

Paul was still diagnosed by his family doctor as having separation anxiety although he was now able to *get on the bus on his own so long as it's the one he knows.* His mother believed Paul's *education [had] come to an end.* Asked to clarify, she stated that he would *learn more out of classrooms because his maturity is growing more than his*

other learning [taken to mean academic or functional academics]. Paul *couldn't face money* because he was *scared he'd get it wrong.* Handling money was one area not addressed in any depth through his Launceston Student Workshop [LSW] program.

Despite this shortcoming, the Workshop program had been *very, very good.* The family was not pleased that Paul's special school had been *trying to get Paul enrolled into a local high school, or even to bus out to a rural District High School.* The LSW had been the *only real source* of communication regarding Paul's skills in the last year. His special school had organised a one day per fortnight off-campus mentoring day with a gardener. This was the Paul's *best chance of getting free of his separation anxiety.* Paul was perceived by his mother as *running from responsibility,* despite his growing capacity to get himself around alone on public transport, accept set roles at the workshop, and manage his cat-breeding program at home.

Paul's mother consistently pointed to his Social Skills as the most inhibiting factor in his progression to independence. Asked whether she had an impression of where he would be and how he would be living in five years time, she *could not see it.* Neither she nor her husband had *any idea whatsoever about TCE,* nor about any of the TCE subjects that Paul was doing at the LSW or at his base Special School. Paul and the family still looked forward to his ROA folio coming home at the end of the year from his Special School, but they were *not sure whether this was going to happen this year.* Asked what such certification or reporting should include about Paul, if it were to be used by him to gain employment or further training opportunities, his mother stated, *It should have what he's done at the workshop, all the things he's learned to do there, and it could tell what he's best at.* A reference would do from the LSW *if it was detailed enough.* Paul's parents gave the impression that ROAs were valued for family interest only, and that the information contained in them for Paul was not pre-vocational in nature.

Paul's parents had not investigated any further training or schooling for him, and were surprised that he could progress to secondary college [Years 11 &12] without *passing* academic prerequisites. They would prefer him to go to a job or to do some training *rather than sit around home all day and lose what he's gained from the workshop.* A supported work program would be acceptable. His mother confided she and her husband were possibly *not the best ones* to organise Paul's transition from home to community life.

2. MEGAN'S PARENTS

First Interview **Nov. 1991**

Megan's parents were *very pleased with her [special] school program,* having also been strong supporters of the local [regular] primary school which their daughter had attended for her whole primary school life. Camps, cooking and Life Skills programs at primary school had contributed most to Megan's successful inclusion. It was Megan who had *dug in her heels* and *decided to opt for special school when the time for high schoiol* had arrived. Megan's parents believed*nothing was useless* at special school and the availability of friends *at her level* was valued both by Megan and her parents. They perceived that Megan had a sensible and practical character which might benefit from the Launceston Student Workshop as she approached an age where she would be eligible to join that program.

Megan's parents were specific in referring to their daughter's optimal learning style as *watching.* Having the opportunity to *see something done* was her *single best way* of learning.

In terms of 'outcomes', Megan's parents were happy with *whatever she could get out of it [school].* Records of Achievement were specifically mentioned as very useful already, in her transfer from one school to the other. They hoped that she would finish school being *able to balance a budget and be independent.* They were convinced that Megan' s future lay outside the family confines.

Second interview **Jan. 1994**

Megan's parents had not noted any significant changes in Megan's learning. Small advances had been made in spelling but her reading had remained basically static. Her mother was disappointed that Megan (15 y.o.) *wasn't up to reading even the Woman's Day yet.* The greatest gains had been made in the Life Skills domain. Megan had learned to *go shopping better, looked up phone numbers and wrote them on her hand* and to be independent of her younger [more able and outgoing] sister and brother. Megan was having characteristic adolescent *body image problems,* not swimming publicly, therefore limiting her summer social activity.

Asked who apart from school personnel had influence in Megan's aspirations her parents felt the Grandparents [paternal] were *with it, but they don't have any clear idea about Megan's future ... nobody does.* The Grandparents agreed with Megan's parents

that Megan has the *go to get on, on her own, after she leaves home.* The assumption was consistent throughout the interview that Megan would be leaving home when she *came of age* , i.e., when she had *either a partner or a friend to share a place with.* The likelihood was that this would occur *when Megan gets upset with us.* The parents, though desiring her independence, would like to be able to *look in on her once a week.*

While they viewed positively the possibility of her going to the local high school *sooner than later,* Megan's parents had little knowledge of either the subject options available at high school, or of further schooling options, such as secondary college. They were not from whom sure to get the information. *Perhaps Mrs [Special School Principal] could know.* They were uncertain whether Megan had the capacity to judge best for herself regarding any curricular options put to her.

The only programs they perceived as being needed in the future were out-of-house experiences like shopping to a budget and getting about the town *on her own bat.* School, they felt, had little impact on her literacy skills. Certificates *wouldn't be necessary.* While it was *important that she has a job,* Megan's parents had no difficulties with the concept of an adjusted 'money-for-value' wage for Megan. They had a belief that *she'll get some sort of a job but probably not what she imagines... doesn't matter so long as she can get along.*

3. ANGELO'S PARENTS

First Interview **Jan. 1992**

Angelo's mother and stepfather were both unemployed. His stepfather was in the process of setting up a business in home-garden maintenance, working from home. Angelo was considered *lazy and in need of a firm hand.* His school history was one of constantly being shifted about to find a school that would *see him as normal,* although none had been *prepared to* do so. School District Guidance officers and psychologists at the Assessment Centre, an independent referral agency which handles non-government assessments in the main, had been consistent in their categorising of Angelo as Mildly Intellectually Disabled, with slightly higher verbal scale abilities than on the performance or more logical, problem-solving scale. His overall score on the WISC-R was 64. The pattern was still of generalised delays, indicating intellectual disability rather than specific learning difficulty. None of this information was accepted as valid by the parents who resisted vehemently the notion that the difficulty lay any further than their child's *work ethic.*

His parents expected Angelo to leave home at an age-appropriate stage and to *fend for himself* as there was *no easy life waiting for him* at home. His stepfather was giving Angelo *extra learning practice to help him catch up,* [which mainly consisted of sums and spelling lists]. The consequence of *getting them wrong* was *helping with more of the housework.* As it was revealed in further questioning, Angelo was responsible wholly for his own room, every roadside rubbish pickup, the lawns, washing up and feeding the dog. He received no remuneration for this. His parents believed Angelo had *no hope of getting himself in and out of town by himself.* Nor did Angelo have a friend in the locality. Consequently he spent any 'leisure' time at home watching television.

Angelo's parents were not available for a second interview. Angelo had taken up through-the-week lodging [in another LSW student's home] nearly three years after the first interview. This had defused a deteriorating home circumstance and had allowed Angelo to continue both an engagement in the Launceston Student Workshop program and to maintain his enrolment at the closest regular high schools to the LSW.

4. SALLY'S PARENTS March and April 1992

Sally's parents were not available for formal interview, although two orchestrated 'meetings' with Sally's mother provided some of the information that has been reported in the Questionnaire to Stakeholder's 'case vignette' on Sally.

Sally's mother was strong in her preference for Sally's education to be *at special school.* It was clear that little confidence was held in Sally's capacity to manage at a regular school. Events later resulted in Sally being fostered into a local family. Despite Sally's new home being closer to the Special School at which she received most of her primary education, Sally chose to travel across town on two buses to maintain her enrolment at the previously 'local' school.

Sally's parents were not able to be interviewed again. At the time of second interviews with the other parents, late in 1993 and early 1994, Sally's mother had moved interstate and her father was serving a short term in prison. Sally had lived with her foster family happily for two years and had left school shortly before the end of Grade 10 to take up a part time job. She had recently moved, with all parties' agreement, into a flat in central Launceston, sharing that flat with a young female nurse. She was living as a fully independent adult, being employed on a close to full-time basis.

5. PETER'S PARENTS

First Interview (with Peter's mother) Feb. 1992

Peter's parents were separated recently, with circumstances which provided reasonable access only to his mother. Peter's mother was not confident of his ability to *stay out of trouble,* believing him too *easily led* and *hot-headed like his father.* On the issue of Peter's curriculum, his mother was concerned that whatever he did, *it's got to give him some sense. He's got to learn to go through with things.* Primary [mostly special] school had been easier for him than high school was. He had *a teacher watching him closely and not him slipping from one to the other and out of arm's reach all the time.*

For the future, there were no clear directions expressed. From the evidence she had, Peter's mother could not predict what vocation or pursuits Peter might be suited to. There appeared to be a belief that whatever Peter turned his hand to, *carelessness* was the result. School, in her view, had little hope of giving him the required discipline. She had expected the Launceston Student Workshop to be more successful in this than it had been. Peter *was not mature enough to handle the directions they gave out.* She had no suggestions for other curricular alternatives.

Peter's Mother, Second interview. March 1994

Peter had *gone from bad to worse* for a while before he *ran off from school shortly before his fifteenth birthday* and had gone hitching up to northern NSW where he had lived in a youth shelter for some months before returning to live in another region of Tasmania. His mother believed that *Peter's girlfriend is his salvation.* He was living in a shared household of six young adults *and doing very well on all their pensions.*

High School had been of *no use to him. He just got in with a bad bunch and got led into trouble like drugs and disappearing ... I was in town with him the other day and he got bashed in front of me by thugs he'd dobbed to the police. It's not safe for him to go into Launceston even daytimes now. He's best off where he is in [another city].*

Peter's program at school gave him *too much time on his hands and no-one to keep a close eye on him.* While his mother had no clear alternatives in mind, she felt that two half-day community tutoring sessions [on Tutor Support Scheme placement] he had been involved in were the *only useful learning times he'd had in his two years of high school.* Formal schooling programs [such as secondary college or TAFE] *would be a*

waste of time for him.... he's burned his bridges with schools. Because Peter had *hardly finished anything* at high school, *the only piece of paper that would be any use [as a school achievement record] is one that says he's stayed out of gaol!*

6. KEITH'S PARENTS

First Interview **Nov. 1992**

Keith's parents were very supportive of his growth from adolescence to adulthood, placing much more emphasis on out-of-school development than the curriculum delivered at school, which they felt was *set up for your ordinary kid. Keith learns by seeing things done, doing things and listening at a desk loses him straight away.* Keith had *always done better at home with his sums than he ever did at school.* If there was *something he was interested in, he'd remember it.* They had organised each evening to give him a little time on Keith's self-initiated Matchbox car method of driver training, using a large cardboard *street map.* Keith worked weekends and after school in his father's mechanical business and had a *fairly good public face.*

Teachers had given Keith *no credit for his initiative.* They were *too inclined to worry about his IQ than to look at his real abilities.* Perhaps the most negative comment about staffing had been that high school had *rarely given him more than a term of continuous contact with the one subject teacher.*

The prospects for life beyond school were clear cut in the sense that Keith would be able to go into working alongside his father. However, the parents had some inclination to encourage Keith to try boarding in town [the city] so that he could go to the Launceston Student Workshop. Keith was the one who showed the least enthusiasm for the idea. Eventually, he decided not to go to the LSW. In his parents' estimation, Work experience *would [have been] better at Grade 9 than having to wait until Grade 10 when he'd [have] his mind made up anyway.*

They felt that the most school could be expected to give Keith was a *sense of self-worth,* but that, in their opinion, was not really coming from the school program. Some individual staff members *understood* him, but *were not able to have him more than a few times a week* so that most of the time he was in things that were *too over his head.* An example given was that despite Keith's ability to cook for himself at home, his *Home Arts lessons were a waste of time because [his] teacher called him 'stupid'.*

They expressed the view that more time should have been spent with Keith giving him practical literacy and numeracy.

Second Interview **Feb. 1994**

Keith was, according to his parents, a success story. A major factor in Keith's development had been the sudden illness of his mother. This had required of Keith a considerable amount of independence and responsibility, with no options to avoid the issues as had sometimes occurred when his mother was about. The most surprising ability shown by Keith was in managing certain of the accounts of his family's motor service business. This was usually his mother's task. When his mother was released from hospital after a long and complicated recovery from surgery, everything to do with the basic takings accounting that had fallen to Keith's responsibility was *in order.*

Schooling had *failed Keith in all but the odd teacher's commitment level.* His exit from school had followed a series of peer-initiated physical and emotional abuses which had been slow to come to light because of Keith's *no-waves* nature. He had also quit the Launceston Student Workshop after one term of successful involvement. The reasons were again related to peer harassment. Keith had always been shy with those outside his immediate family. He had *never gone out of his way to make friends.* It was only through his closest cousins that Keith had begun to have non-family friendships. In the role of driveway attendant, he was not so shy, having been spoken of highly by customers.

His driving practise with cardboard and Matchbox cars had paid off, with Keith now being a 'P' licensed driver and owner of two vehicles and a motor bike. His parents were confident that he would achieve his ambition of gaining a heavy truck licence in time.

Asked whether they could comment on the relative value of any school subjects studied by Keith before he left school, Keith's parents could not specify anything except some social science classes where his teacher had *done some reading and gave him a boost.* This had passed though, after Grade 8. They had no understanding of the TCE structure of short and longer courses, nor had they sought a copy of Keith's TCE summary certificate (transcript). Keith's several ROAs were *somewhere* in the house for *sentiment's sake.*

His mother felt that the most successful approach to teaching Keith Life Skills and employment related skills was to *take him through stages.* One example was first allowing him to serve in the shop section of the business, then to progress to the

driveway, *handling the gas* and then to the accounts. There were stages yet to go through for Keith because of his distaste of dirt and grease [when dealing with *others'* grime] so his folks were *giving him so many hours out the back with the mechanics and so many out front with the customers.* Keith *only begrudgingly did the dirty work.*

Keith was saving effectively for a trip to the UK, having already largely funded a trip to New Zealand with his grandmother and sister. Described as *tight with his money,* Keith was considered *capable now of budgeting for himself if ever it came to it that he had to fend for himself.* They were bemused at the level of interest Keith had shown in organising his own 18th birthday celebration. Although it would involve mainly family members, all kin of a 'suitable' age had been invited.

c) Interviews with Teachers

Three sources have been used for the data related in this section:

i. The planned interviews with school-based teachers of the target or focal students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities;

ii. Interviews with Launceston Student Workshop (LSW) staff; and

iii. Notes from a brainstorm session held during a combined Workshop for Support Staff/Secondary Teachers in Special Needs of the Forester/Macquarie School Districts late in 1993.

As noted earlier in the chapter, a brief subjective 'follow-up exercise' was given to teachers following their interviews, in which they were asked to estimate the relative domain emphases in their schools' curriculums. Grade 7 and Grade 9 subjects were each scrutinised by responding teachers for the emphasis given by their schools' subject teachers to the four curricular domains of *Academic, Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills.* These data are reported under Research Question 3, towards determining an appropriate domain mix in the curriculums of MID students.

The scheduled interviews with teachers, including the staff of LSW were conducted through 1993 and in early 1994. The first was conducted in late February of 1993 and the last in May of 1994. A total of eleven teachers were interviewed. Comments from teachers are reported under the stem questions used. Each paragraph represents a different teacher 's response to the question. Where there were substantial similarities in certain teachers' responses, duplication has been avoided in reporting the comments.

1. What is it that is most needed in the curriculum of the students you know who have Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

[She] gets in with girls who set her up for trouble-she needs to be able to know when to hold her own. Its interpersonal nous, I think. Nobody can teach it unless it's part of talk started by the kids.

I find they have great difficulty being anything but passive observers. We ought to be engaging them--something they can see is real and meaningful for the world outside school. The main run of school stuff just doesn't touch them.

The ones who do Workshop [LSW] seem to have something to look forward to. All the strugglers should have something like that. It's more stable than the curriculum in classrooms here.

[He] is scared witless about after school - not just every day, but he's not able to even imagine being out of a school. His need is reality therapy. Making friends with the big wide world.

Social Skills. Making the first moves, and making them unobtrusively. If you're going to expand your friendships there's age-appropriate ways to do it.

[He] needs to be less of a loner. He hasn't got friends, and I don't think in this situation he's able to make any. Most kids do this without having to think.

Health Work and Daily Living [a course of Life Skills relevant to all adolescents] had the most value. [He] needed to get some picture of how it all fitted, not bits of messages here in one subject and there in a totally different one.

[Their] greatest need is for time in the community, learning things we take for granted with other kids, like transport, using a supermarket, and getting familiar with what it means to work; some of them just haven't got an idea.

[He] needs a lot of work in getting along with others and ignoring the chips from other students.

2. Which curricular areas are most or least appropriate for MID students?

[He] has a lot of trouble with age-appropriate ideas in Health and SOSE [Studies of Society and the Environment].

[She] can't keep up with things [reading of novels] and I don't know if it's good to just have her reading her picture books or not.

[He] never gets his projects done in time. You just can't give him a Pass on the criteria if he hasn't done the work.

[She] does OK in topics where I can give her stuff at her own level, but when it's a whole class thing, she loses the plot and goes into herself.

[He] manages really well with the tutors [community day-placements] where he can see it's not just school and marks that count. His tutor thinks he's got a good head for money but he's never been able to stay with the maths classes; he does the maths in the life-skills group.

Teachers in active subject areas have an easier time of it.

3. Any differences once they undertake TCE subjects?

Now [he's] doing the B courses we've had to organise a double-up so he can get into two social studies class groups; he couldn't grasp the work unless we did, but it makes timetabling his other subjects difficult. We've dropped him out of some subjects like science altogether.

If only there were ways [her] A courses [short courses] could be kept ticking while she's in some of the B courses she'll never complete.

What I find is nobody knows what anybody else has got planned for [him]. If he's doing a subject he ought to have something to show for it.

The curriculum's too big for them.

The TCE structure should be good for disabled [students] because it gives them some meaningful choices. But they soon lose the pace and lose heart with the load. Its still better than [Grade] 7 and 8. It's teachers that can make the curriculum work, if we know how or <u>want</u> to know how.

4. What strategies work in your classes to make the curriculum more accessible to him/her?

I give [him] more time to do his work, but I have to write plenty of notes for his Mum and the other people working with him so they know what we're expecting. When it works it's very rewarding for him. He's never finished anything before, it appears.

The Social Studies unit we wrote with a readability of something like 7.5 [years] reading age was pretty successful; it was the same basic material but at [his] level. He actually got into our class discussions. He wasn't the only one who used the modified booklet, either. [Several of the weaker readers in the class took up the notes which were in larger print and had more illustrations].

The Enterprise group does lots of budgeting so we made it [her] job to keep track of the money. [A peer] helps her out if she gets stuck but it's rare.

5. What do teachers need in order to provide a more effective curriculum for intellectually disabled students?

We need more materials that the kids can make sense of, and work more independently with.

The big need is for ways to manage more than one syllabus at once.

Our professional development program doesn't give staff enough understanding of Life Skills programs. There's a Transition program going on in the District but you don't hear about it and it's only for the Category A [centrally funded] students. There's not enough in that line for many of our students.

The school has to put more into funding community access programs. We can't afford to take 100 percent of our classes out in order to build up the skills of, say, the 20 percent who don't have basic Life Skills.

I'd do a special education course if I could afford it. There's not really enough for an experienced teacher at the District level [of professional development].

6. What collaboration do you see as useful or necessary in curriculum matters? With which other providers?

It means more work unless there's somebody with time to co-ordinate what's being assessed.

I'd like to think we weren't doubling up on what [he] was getting from home. You get more urgency from the parents of the bright kids.

[She] gets on really well with [her weekend employer, in this case a newsagent]. I'd love to ask him what he thinks she ought to be doing.

In an ideal world we'd all have time to keep up with what we're all doing. There's no spelled-out responsibility... whose role is it to make those links?

7. How effective is the TCE reporting/assessing process for MID students?

[He] wasn't able to meet most of the criteria for the B course so I assessed him for [an A course in the same subject area]. Only a few of us ever manage to do that sort of thing, so [his] certificate was not much.

I don't think the TCE at the end of things gives a true picture of the student - it just shows a small part of the whole business - it doesn't show how far they [disadvantaged students] have come in their self-help skills or anything. Unless your employer knows about the sort of problems they have, the TCE [certificate] is actually a drawback in itself. Probed about the reason for this, the teacher stated *"they don't have enough passes to list, showing it to anybody needs too much explanation to save it being seen as poor."*

It sorts out the schools more than the kids.

If you carried over the assessment from year to year you might get somewhere, but you'd still end up with fewer Passes on his certificate.

8. What about Records of Achievement? Do they work?

They are a lot of work if you're going to be fair to all your students. It's OK. at primary levels when you've got twenty odd kids, but a secondary teacher has hundreds to keep abreast of. I think it should just be for those who can't be expected to put their own folio together.

[He] loves his 'report book' as he calls it. His parents take parts out of it each year and keep it in a clip folder for later. It was the first thing he wanted to show his L.A.P. [Learning Assistance Program] tutor this year.

You've got to imagine it's hard for an employer to judge. The ROAs are full of all these different things for different kids. Perhaps there ought to be a common format or something. They might have more credibility then.

For [female MID student] the Profile [ROA] is one place she can gather references and the sorts of things that she feels successful with. She's never put one school report in her Profile.

Parent/teacher sessions are a lot better with ROAs or RODs (Records of Development) handy... they speak for themselves.

9. Who do you refer to when you're planning for MID students?

You can't listen to everyone. I listen to the students first, and then their parents if I think they have a clue. Otherwise you have to go by your own judgement. I looked at the program [a version of an Individual Education Program] once at the beginning of the year and then went day-by-day because you couldn't anticipate [his] moods;

I do talk with a few of his other teachers and especially if I can with [the guidance officer]. Asked whether there was curricular co-ordination that ensued from these discussions, this teacher responded, *Not really, but I get some sense of whether I'm over or under-expecting things.*

We have a monthly case conference with a wide range of professionals. You don't get everybody there every time but we each get a copy of the proceedings from [the guidance officer].

We got together [subject co-ordinators] and agreed on what subjects he would do [outside of the resource room].

10. What differences do you perceive in MID students' curricular needs from those of the majority ?

I don't see any difference in any group's needs. It's how to teach a wide range that makes for differences.

The MID kids from [Special School] have good self-esteem but poor Social Skills, and the ones from here [regular high school] have poorer self-esteem and better Social Skills.

I don't play catch-up games. I don't think I could ever put that sort of pressure on the slow students. You've got to have a clear picture of the child inside the teenager's body...you might be dealing with person who is really three or four years younger than their size or age shows.

11. Are there any factors which mitigate against success in the curriculum for MID students?

[They] haven't got the reading skills to make sense of most of your lessons. You can forget texts and study notes.

Most of their parents have had terrible times at school. They're scared stiff and it rubs off on the kids... homework is a dead loss in my subjects [Maths and Technology].

They have to act up before they get any attention, and by the time they get it they're already running with the wolves. It's too hard for them to settle down

and places like LSW can't take them on because they're too wound up and agro.

Expectations haven't changed. It's sink or swim in most cases.

You have to get down to priorities. It [curriculum] can't be all things to all people.

The Workshop [LSW] has a lot of value. They [those with learning difficulties] see it as the real world; overalls and real products and business hours. It's a shame there aren't more places in programs like that.

Until we have a secondary system that looks past subjects, we will never meet their needs. The focus could be on cross-curricular skills like capabilities. Subjects don't really count except on the TCE.

Interviews with Staff: Launceston Student Workshop

Interviewed prior to her retirement in the first year of this research project, the founding director of the Workshop had a belief that *the struggling student won't get the sorts of skills (he) needs from a classroom in which he feels a failure. All he will learn is helplessness.* After more than fifteen years of operation, the Workshop had achieved an enviable record of placement for its students into open employment. Over 85 percent of the students left school following their program with jobs. *They are employed for their skills and employability, not for their disability. Employers don't pay wages as charity.* The director noted that most of the students were employed in areas outside the wood and metal trades. This was further proof to her that the program generated job market characteristics that suited employers who were employing for reliability and other such attributes. Although generic, these skills *are something they get from real responsibilities.* The work ethic was not compromised by *'parents' cotton wool* treatment of the students that reinforced their weakness rather than their dignity. *The students don't see this as Work Experience. They see it as work.*

As mentioned earlier, the first director of the Workshop retired while the research was in its early stages. In order to gain another perspective of the Workshop's role regarding curriculum and MID students, the new director was interviewed, after nearly a year of managing the program. This person had considerable experience in special schooling and knew some of the focal subjects from earlier inter-school contact.

Asked why the Workshop had such a good success rate in open employment placements, the director responded *employers are getting workers with two years*

experience of responsible working at the 16 year old rate of pay, rather than 18 year old with no real working experience at an 18 year old pay scale.

According to the Director, parents of clients held some reservations regarding the LSW provision. The gender imbalance in the participants was perceived as a difficulty for girls, at least in the introductory phase when the students are expected to make their own judgements about the suitability of the enterprise for them. It was, at first viewing, quite male dominated. Apart from the Co-ordinator, the staff were males and at the time of the second interview, one current student, was female.
The gender imbalance of the Workshop enrolments (only 8 percent female students) was *the result of peer pressure which labels the girls as 'butch' and in particular teacher preconceptions which saw the facility as a boys' scene with vocational ends not suited to girls' prospects.* Female teachers in the regular high schools were identified as the major 'perpetuators ' of sexist stereotyping of trades-based vocational training. There was also a sense of scepticism from teachers that girls volunteering were simply interested in boys. This fear was not supported by my observations nor by comments from student participants when asked about gender issues at the workshop. The boys made comments such as *Megan's just one of us. She can take care of herself.*

There was no notable difference between the performances or outcomes of students coming to the Workshop from either high school or special school. The students coming from a regular context, however, were more likely to be engaged in TCE courses and suffered greater disjunction from their week-on-week-off cycle than did the special school students whose programs were more tailor-made, life-skills oriented and flexible in delivery but *more 'soft'* in some of their assessment methods.

Four TCE grade 9/10 subjects were addressed directly through the Workshop program, in addition to anything else done at students' base schools. These were Industrial Workshop Procedures, Industrial Woodwork, Industrial Metalwork, and Industrial Health and Safety. In some cases there was *little else on the eventual TCE certificate apart from these subjects and one or two home science courses or Maths for Living, nothing hard core.* Workshop staff were constantly in the process of assessment across the various syllabuses. Certain criteria-related obstacles were directly addressed by staff via the planning of workshop tasks related to production and maintenance. It was stated that the criteria *needed to be reviewed over a long period, sometimes over the full two years of workshop involvement.* There was *little or no follow-up* from base school teachers regarding collaboration in planning or assessment.

A difficulty lay in the fortnightly cycle of attendance, week-on, week-off between the student's base school and the Workshop. This was seen by most interviewed teachers as disruptive to both programs. At the time of the interview with the present Workshop Co-ordinator a review was being made of delivery models which might overcome the obvious difficulties that alternating weeks pose to learning continuity with these students. The Co-ordinator felt that, as suggested by teachers and by the Social/Life Skills priorities data from Stakeholders, the problem could be seen to rest more with the inflexibility of the main program's whole-class delivery style than with the weekly rotation of LSW involvement.

There had been requests from employers for Workshop staff to 'follow along' the students in job training as a pre-condition of employment. This was not possible at this stage, given staffing levels.

One aspect of the development of workplace literacy was particularly noteworthy. Students from special schools were coming to the workshop with solid decoding skills but little comprehension of text in unfamiliar contexts or purposes. Despite this, they were in a better position than the high school students who were largely 'print-phobic' from unmodified reading materials beyond their reading capability. The major change in workplace literacy from school texts and story material was the prevalence of *sub texts* or purposes which guided understanding of abbreviations such as "CONTS.", "QTY", and variable product descriptions such as "Wrench, hexagonal" instead of Allen key and "Fastener, spiral thread, cross-head, stainless" for Phillips-head screw. The students are taught in school, home and workplace to identify tools and hardware by their common names, not by product codes that they are likely to confront in 'stock'. The Director believed, *The skills of reading decontextualised terms need to be taught through unlearning the focus on print. An awareness of the 'purpose' and trust of that knowledge is needed to make sense of print in the workplace.* For MID students, this most often requires explicit teaching. New contexts will likely require review of changed 'literal functions'. It was noted that MID students are *better at this because they don't make false or rash assumptions like bright language disabled students.*

A further suggestion from the current director was that building the automaticity of effective workplace behaviour is a benefit from Workshop training that demands a caution: *What is not automatic is that the student will use the rest of their brain for quality control. This is something the students are not used to being in the position of doing. They are prone to leave the multi-tasking of quality control or some safety aspects inactive.*

The major curricular strategy perceived by the director as necessary for better outcomes and more effective content in the Workshop students' programs was collaboration among those teaching the student in all contexts and subject areas. The portability of criteria across subject areas needed to be recognised as a mutual assessment task of teachers, including trades persons and staff of work placement sites. The co-ordination of this aspect would require a more mobile person than any of the particular site-specific staff.

Perceptions from Secondary Teachers involved in Special Education

Although not a planned part of the interview process, a majority of the interviewed teachers were engaged in a professional development session, a 'Workshop for Teachers of Special Needs Students in Secondary Schools' run by the Forester District Support team late in 1993. Several factors were mentioned by teachers as being *significant influences* in their provisions for students with disabilities, the bulk of whom had Mild Intellectual Disabilities. The list given following, which was recorded during the session, gives a school-level picture of dynamics at play in contemporary curriculum design and delivery as they pertain to MID students:

- *expansion of curriculum areas, including compulsory ones;*
- *early high school fades primary curriculum negotiation capacities;*
- *cross-curricular emphasis becoming important;*
- *middle schooling offering extended subject integration for some slow students;*
- *education preparing for unemployment;*
- *increased accountability to parents;*
- *parents not clear on new practice, assessment or technologies;*
- *increased pastoral role for teachers, and critical issue problem solving;*
- *widening of teaching methodologies used;*
- *teachers' interpretation of curriculum and creation of modified materials;*
- *teacher/pupil ratios increasing, ability spread increasing;*
- *computerisation requiring more student independence skills;*
- *co-operative criteria/competencies contradicted by individualism and competitive job market;*
- *school-industry links traditionally highlight gifted and productive achievers.*

Compilation and Analysis of the Data from the Several Interview Rounds with Students, Parents and Teachers

The data from the interviews has been tabulated to show their relationship to the key research question regarding MID students' curriculum needs. Given the longitudinal character of the interviews, the term 'needs' carries here notions both of: a) what was desired but insufficiently available and; b) what *was* valued or 'appreciated' in its availability. Tables 1 and 2 (pp. 101, 102) show the coding of responses according to stakeholder groups interviewed. Considerable levels of agreement were evident among interviewed stakeholders regarding the curriculum needs of MID students. Tables 1 and 2 are arranged by curriculum outcomes, content and processes with the curriculum domains addressed first, across the three interviewed stakeholder groups.

Curriculum needs: Outcomes and Content

The academic domain

While Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills were emphasised consistently in the interviews. Academic Skills were not raised as important 'outcomes' and were only mentioned as 'content' in two instances by focus students. The most academic 'need', expressed by Angelo, was for lunch-time catch-up tutorials in *reading and writing*. Keith felt his spelling potential was underestimated and therefore not fulfilled.

Parents mentioned on more than one occasion the need for basic literacy, but the context of those references was functional (Life Skills), rather than academic. Music was mentioned by Sally and Peter. (Peter's musical experience was that he learned successfully to 'read' music notation at ten years of age, before he could claim more than a handful of sight words). Though music is recorded as having an "academic" skill content, the students saw a recreational value in music which was at least as important to them as music's academic worth. Parents also perceived a need for the MID students (as with *all* students) to be made aware of the TCE subject structure. This relates closely to their belief that, as a curriculum process, negotiation is essential to maximise the motivational impact of relevance in course content and outcomes.

The 'academic' need most evident in students' responses and in several teachers' comments was for more time: time to understand the learning demands of particular curriculum; time to decode the content of materials and instruction; time to fulfil assignment demands; time to practice and grasp skills; *and* time to revisit and refresh knowledge as needed in later situations.

Table 1 **MID students' curriculum needs as perceived by stakeholders interviewed**

MID students' CURRICULUM NEEDS	Stakeholders Interviewed		
	MID focus Students (*n*=6)	**Parents** (*n*=11)	**Teachers** (*n*=11)
OUTCOMES (Plain text) **CONTENT** (*italicised*)	**Academic skills** *Music; Basic reading; Spelling.*	**Academic skills** *Literacy; Aware TCE subj. structure*	
	Life skills Cook for self; Homekeeping; Budgeting; self-knowledge of weaknesses & strengths; *Woodwork; functional academics*	**Life skills** Independence; Money-handling; *Group programs;* *Functional literacy/numeracy content*	**Life Skills** *Community access Transition-to-community focus; Student Enterprise programs Integrated life-skills course (such as Health, Work & Daily Living)*
	Pre-vocational Skills Experience of work; Know post-compulsory options for educ'n; *Post-school community options*	**Pre-vocational skills** Perseverence Job prospects *Work & community contexts*	**Pre-vocational skills** Pre-vocational [not task] skills; LSW *School/Industry links for at-risk students*
	Social Skills Assertiveness re teasing; Impulse control; relationship skills; *Friendship/relationship making*	**Social skills** Impulse control; Self-awareness	**Social skills** Age-appropriate interaction; Friendship making capacity

Table 2 Curriculum processes perceived by interviewed stakeholders as "needed " for MID students

CURRICULUM PROCESSES for MID Students	Stakeholders Interviewed		
	MID focus Students (*n* =6)	**Parents** (*n*=11)	**Teachers** (*n*=11)
Contextualising	Continuity of learning context Primary school relationships Smaller teacher/pupil ratio Like-minded reference group Caring, supportive context Non-school learning/context; LSW	Stability: staff & program; Supervision continuity (of teacher) Smaller schools Friends at developmental level Special school's student welfare Non-school learning contexts; LSW	Stable learning context Community-based tutors Non-school learning contexts
Planning	Student involved in subject decisions; Negotiation re curriculum content	Experiences appropriate to student developmental stage	Home/school planning of content; Prioritise & rationalise content; Plan / resource community access
Materials Selection	Readable, useable materials		Readable, modified materials
Instruction	Lunchtime "catch-ups" Time (extra); slower course pace	Demonstration / learning by doing ; Relevance as motivator	Cross-context teachng;
Assessment	Know TCE assessment function; Records of Achievement; Student Involvement in record-keeping/collection; Product outcome for appreciation.	Useful school achievement records; Records of Achievement	Longer to assess syllabus; Common informal reporting; Collaboration across staff and contexts to assess syllabus criteria; TCE as flexibile, choice-rich.

The Life Skills domain

Stakeholders' predominant concerns were for developing skills directly applicable to post-school independence. The exposure of students to community and work contexts was seen as a necessary precursor in the transition to adulthood. Life Skills and Pre-vocational Skills share this relationship to community-referenced learning for MID adolescents.

Life Skills were clearly important in all stakeholders' curriculum considerations or recommendations. The expectation of independence is both explicit and implicit in the interview data. Parents valued the school programs which incorporated independence-building activities and their students' skills in this domain were perceived as most pressing or of most urgency. Dependence on the part of their children meant lack of independence for the parents or simply more work. The difference of their MID children from their regular age peers was made obvious in the life-skills areas. From early in their children's school-lives, markers of maturity such as tying shoelaces, keeping clean and dressing oneself have been major hurdles of acceptance into peer groups. Consequently, in parents' views, daily living skills took precedence over Social Skills. Similar perspectives were expressed in regard to transition to adulthood. Without self-care and community mobility, without the capacity to budget and keep house, independence was not a foreseeable reality.

Student Enterprise programs, which were able to deliver both life skills of money-handling and functional literacy, were valued highly by teachers for the programs' interpersonal imperatives. These enterprises included collaborative planning, production and marketing and as such are the sorts of practical contexts within which real social skill development was considered most likely to occur for MID students. Although Student Enterprise itself was not mentioned specifically by parents and students, group programs, functional literacy and 'money-handling' numeracy were. These are the fundamentals of Student Enterprise programs. The TCE modified syllabus, *Basic Catering Enterprise*, mentioned by 'Sally' and one of her teachers as having been "very successful for her", incorporates the same Life Skills elements.

The dominant theme from interviewees was the imperative of skill acquisition for post-school life.

The Social Skills domain

In the area of Social Skills, the data reveal a great shortfall in the friendship and relationship skills of MID students. The most common experience among the students is loneliness born out of self-perceived inability to make and maintain long-term

relationships outside the family circle. Viewed ecologically, the ability of the focus MID adolescents to break out of their 'microsystem' to form or work through linkages to others' microsystems is limited. As can be seen from some of the case vignettes, the limitations come from several factors: the protectiveness of families; dysfunctional family relationships and the resultant lack of home-hosted friendships; the failure of schools to allay fears of being teased and misled; the difficulty in providing robust and forgiving non-school learning options for school-age students.

There was a notable absence, in the remarks of parents, concerning the friendship - making and maintaining skills of their children. The pool of like-minded peers available to MID students out of school contexts was small, limited further by the protectiveness that is characteristic of many parents whose children have cognitive difficulties. The students did not have rich and rewarding interpersonal after-school lives. Some had hobbies such as pet breeding, but none of the interviewed students could claim solid friendships that went beyond school hours. That parents did not identify the matter as a problem could possibly be explained as satisfaction on their part that their children's safety was somehow served by the children's 'home-boundedness'.

Though teachers had high regard for community access and transition orientations for MID students, they nevertheless paid greater attention to the importance of Social Skills. These were more capable of stigmatising and isolating their children in a regular school context than were delays in developing age-appropriate daily living skills. The importance of students developing 'impulse control' was mentioned on several occasions across stakeholder groups. It would appear that neither the behaviourism that characterises much of the discipline plans of school, nor the humanism that marks school welfare policies, have brought about the required skills of self-control in MID students. Interview references to students' self-awareness, knowledge of strengths and limitations and conscious initiation in relationships all point to a need for metacognitive development rather than reflexive behavioural training.

Pre-vocational Skills

MID students' need for content and outcomes in work-related areas was emphasised strongly in the interviews. The frequent demand across stakeholder groups was for more access by MID students to work experiences and work environments. This reflected a belief that hard won independence was even more difficult to achieve when school time was not given in sufficient proportions for 'slow' students with limited age-appropriate experiences to acquire saleable and socially esteemed skills.

The ability in MID students to recognise their own strengths and limitations was mentioned by one teacher as an attribute needed for sensible work choices. The teacher, a special educator in a regular high school, echoed Green's (1991) notion that asking what students wanted to *be* was likely to lead some MID students into unrealistic and frustrating expectations. Rather a range of activities that could be 'done' in certain work and community roles was suggested as a more inclusive angle for teachers and visiting career advisors from a range of industries and services.

A note of realism was also evident in some families' attitudes to supported employment (probationary work entry with training support and or lower entry-levelsalaries). The parents of Paul and Megan were of the opinion that productivity-related pay scales were fair options for employers to apply to their children as beginning workers. This was a better scenario in their view than no work at all. Rather than exploitation, supported employment was perceived as a 'foot in the door'. The students' right to be free of the social security system was implicit in parents' and teachers' comments.

Employment is thus an important indicator to families of the target students (and students themselves) of independence and maturity, second only in importance only to the MID person's ability to live away from home.

Parents in particular saw a need for students to have skills in using public transport for community access and 'going to work' independently. This capability is not targeted in such programs as Work experience. For the ordinary student, it is taken for granted that transport use is a life skill gained as part of normal development. For MID students, both parents and the staff of the LSW indicated that the process involved in getting to and from the workplace was at least as important as any of the other work experiences intended from the work-related programs.

One parent expressed the unsolicited view that work experience should be available at Grade 9 level because her son had made up his mind by the start of Grade 10 that school was not going to "get him a job". Although this is more a process suggestion than anything else, knowledge of the world of work was again being emphasised as content which was important for the outcome of fulfilment and independence desired for (and by) MID students. The referencing of school work to community functioning was recognised by parents and teachers as critical to MID students maintaining an interest in the school week.

Despite parents' acknowledgment of the motivational impact upon their children of bridging post-school life to secondary experience, several of the parents were unaware

of the opportunities their children had for going beyond compulsory schooling into further education, believing that Years 11 and 12 constituted only tertiary preparation courses. Parents whose children were involved in the Launceston Student Workshop program were inclined to see actual job placement as the only employment-related option.

Curriculum needs: Processes

The number of references made by interviewees to curriculum processes, in particular to contextualisation of learning, led to the development of a separate table. Table 2 (p.102) presents the processes which stakeholders felt were either not adequately available (such as extra time and a slower pace) or 'valued' highly where they were available to the MID students (such as ROAs and non-school learning contexts such as LSW).

The curriculum processes are not broken down into curriculum domains because they apply across the board. Perhaps the only domain-specific process is the suggestion from previous paragraphs that, in relation to Pre-vocational Skills, earlier-than-normal access be available to workplaces and related contexts. The academic and Social Skills domains, on the other hand, have conceptual reasons for age-appropriate introduction, or even delayed introduction according to the learner's readiness to accommodate the knowledge. Early access to skills with high cognitive demands was not suggested for the MID students by parents or teachers.

The curriculum processes which have emerged from the data fall into five subheadings: *contextualising; planning; materials selection/access; instruction* and *assessment.*

Contextualising

Contextual processes were mentioned most commonly, with particular importance given to the availability of non-school contexts and working-life familiarity for MID students. Stability and student welfare processes identified with the smallness and supportiveness of special schools was valued by each stakeholder group. The lack of friends at their developmental level in the high schools of the integrated students, was noted both by the students themselves and by most of the teachers interviewed.

Planning

Planning was identified by students and teachers as a process of negotiation. To the MID students, this meant that they would like to be involved in the choice-making regarding subject content and course options. Teachers saw negotiation more as a

partnership between home and school, with prioritising of curriculum undertakings being referenced to the transitional, community referenced needs of the student. One teacher noted that such a focus would demand affirmative resourcing for the relatively expensive process of taking small numbers of students through common (but unfamiliar to MID students) community activity.

Teachers emphasised the inherent limitations of the most prevalent syllabuses for students who could not "keep up the pace" in regular classrooms. Age appropriateness and developmental appropriateness, seen by parents as necessary for successful curricular planning, were difficulties recognised by teachers in planning inclusive lessons. The teachers experienced in managing MID students, while giving the impression that *they* were capable of teaching in a multi-level mode, did not show the same confidence in *other* teachers' multi-level teaching abilities for MID and other "exceptional" students in class.

While teachers also recognised that there was an attractive syllabus range potentially available to MID students, much of the learning needed to be addressed in cross-curricular fashion, requiring considerable collaboration among relevant teachers in the monitoring and assessment of students' learning. Given that one of the contextual processes identified as beneficial by teachers was the use of community tutors and non-school learning contexts, collaboration carries with it a demand for co-ordination. Cross-contextual assessment, if acknowledged by schools, will have personnel and other resourcing implications. Roles exist in both primary and secondary schools which might incorporate such a task. Wherever schools decide to place the responsibility, the implication is that the process of cross-contextual assessment of needs and achievement in learning cannot be left to chance. The co-ordination role must be assigned.

Materials selection

The availability and selection of suitable *materials* were identified by both the students and their teachers as seriously inadequate. The deficiency is not surprising, as publishers are reticent to invest in print runs that target a relatively small percentage of the student population, i.e., 2.3 percent of students with disabilities who may engage in print reading (National Library of Australia, 1991). Teachers who were modifying materials for their special needs students noted the work required to do so as a significant 'stressor' in their role and in the changes demanded of them by a more inclusive schooling environment. A paucity of readable texts and commercial materials, particularly for instructive purposes (rather than recreational reading), was

noted by classroom teachers, Launceston Student Workshop's director and two of the MID students undertaking regular high school TCE courses.

Instruction

The processes of *instruction* which were evident in the interview data relate closely to the contextual demands already mentioned. The need was expressed for teachers to maximise demonstration, preferably in context, and to allow maximal opportunity for hands-on learning for the student. The suggestions from teachers and parents were based on MID students' successful experiences, rather than arising from students' difficulties. The role of 'time' in successful curriculum delivery was emphasised across stakeholder groups, with several references made to the need for extra time, a slower course pace and the repetition of content across several relevant contexts.

Several of the parents were emphatic about the motivational power of relevant content and the fact that demonstration and performance are critical to teaching their children successfully. The interviews showed that these conclusions were born of daily experiences with their children, frustrated often by over expectations and "simple explanations" that "totally miss the mark".

Students were inclined to value successful learning in a limited range of areas rather than an expansive but unclear set of half-learnings. 'Angelo' made a strong plea for access to lunch-time catch-up sessions so that his basic skills might be adequate for maintaining touch within the regular subject classes. Clearly, MID students and those who influence them immediately are aware of the satisfaction they derive from genuine, applicable understanding. Participation alone is an insufficient rationale for curricular involvement.

Assessment

Assessment is a process which, in Stakeholders' views, must be marked by collaboration among all participants and the purposeful engagement of the MID students in knowing the functions of course assessment and the uses of reporting procedures, especially for the workplace. Parents and students were outspoken in their valuing of Records of Achievement, while teachers sought consistency and collaboration in all assessment processes, whether formal (TCEs and reports to parents) or informal (ROAs, work-sample folios, and references). The area of assessment was at the forefront of the minds of those interviewed, as they saw the process as related directly to the equity in outcomes of the MID students' programs.

There were two discernible currents within respondents' comments about assessment. First, assessment had an ongoing connection to planning. Without effective monitoring of MID students' learning, the predominance of 'normal' expectations would perpetuate content which went "over the students' heads" and which failed to recognise the developmental prerequisites of progress in each of the curriculum domains. Student failure was linked by parents and students to frustration.

Assessment had, therefore, a second identified role: it needed to motivate the student by celebrating their most enabling achievements or accomplishments. Parents and teachers were quick to point out that achievements for many of the MID students were other-than-academic, and yet required similar targeting, instruction (or facilitation), assessment and recognition of accomplishment as would be expected with academic gains. Life skills and social skills were not seen to "come naturally" to the students who had long histories of school failure (creating frustration and isolation) and longer-than-normal dependence on their parents (in the interests of safety as much as anything else).

While there was a strong level of agreement evident across the three interviewed groups with regard to *contextualising* and *planning* processes, *materials selection* and *instruction* were more teacher-specific and situation-specific. In terms of *assessment*, there was a marked difference of focus between home and school perceptions.

Students and parents were uninformed and unclear about the criterion referencing of formal TCE assessment and the meanings of subject codes and pass attainment levels in the summary certification. They favoured a more concrete and relatable folio in the form of Records of Achievement.

Teachers, on the other hand, directed their attention during interviews to what they appeared to consider the more 'hard-nosed' option of the regular TCE assessment and reporting process. They recognised that assessment must keep pace with learning, and that in the case of MID students, this meant slowing down the assessment process. To assess at the normal speed would perpetuate low levels of attainment and therefore produce disadvantages in the whole TCE structure for MID students.

First Questionnaire: to Stakeholder Groups.

The results of the first Questionnaire to Stakeholder Groups, are presented in Tables 3 to 7. The Questionnaire is shown in Appendix I. The Questionnaire to Stakeholders comprised two sections. The first gave respondents an opportunity to rate the importance of certain curriculum outcomes and content for the six target MID adolescents. The data from the first section pertain to the first research question on "curriculum needs". Data from the second section, concerning the perceptions of respondents on several issues regarding the influences, constraints and contexts surrounding curriculum for MID students, have been applied later in the *Results* chapter to the second and third research questions which address across-stakeholder consistency and curriculum domain balance.

Response Rate

One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed. Seventy-two were returned, all of which had useable data. This represented an overall response rate of exactly 60 percent. As mentioned, one stakeholder group, employers, had a relatively poor response rate of only 20 percent (n=3) from the fifteen employers approached.

Data from the Questionnaire to Stakeholders

The main section of the first Questionnaire to Stakeholders concerned stakeholders' perceptions of the relative importance of a range of *Outcomes* and *Content.* These items were identified by the researcher and an expert panel of teachers, support personnel and educational administrators as pertinent to discussion concerning the curriculum needs of MID students. The items are inclusive of content and outcomes expected from the curriculums of both non-disabled and disabled students. Table 3 and Table 4 display data as they pertain to each of the of six MID students at the centre of the study.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of certain curricular elements to the students whose brief school histories (Appendix I) were provided as background information. Five choices made up the rating scale. They were accorded 'scores' as follows : 0= no importance at all; 1= a small need; 2= desirable; 3= fairly important and 4= of great importance. Tables 3 and 4 show the percentages of all respondents (N=72) who rated the various curriculum elements as "fairly important" or "of great importance".

From the tables, it is possible to ascertain which curriculum *Outcomes* and *Content* for MID students have attracted strong 'importance' ratings from stakeholders. Data on *Outcomes* are presented first:

Table 3 Percentage of all Stakeholders citing specific *outcomes* as "fairly or "very important" for each student.

Students	Curriculum Outcomes									
	TCE Certificate	Records of Achievement	Work or Job skills	Independence of Living	Self Care and Health	Social Strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective Communication	Reading/writing to Potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
PAUL	22	51	76	78	86	86	100	91	78	100
MEGAN	25	67	84	100	100	97	97	96	91	99
ANGELO	37	59	86	97	97	89	97	96	86	92
SALLY	18	66	83	92	97	92	99	96	91	95
PETER	21	51	82	93	93	95	99	88	79	87
KEITH	20	62	99	99	93	96	99	99	82	93
(Total Stakeholders N=72)										

Curriculum Outcomes

All but two *Outcomes* items in Table 3 were rated as "fairly important" or "very important" by more than 75 percent of Stakeholders. The notable exceptions were the generally low rating by respondents of the *TCE certificate* and *Records of Achievement.* The TCE summary certificate is issued in Tasmania by the Schools Board, a State Government body which oversees the standards represented in both internal and external assessments, including tertiary entrance scores related to TCE syllabus attainment. Government schools, including special schools, must undertake TCE subjects as the formally assessable elements of their curricula. Non-government schools may or may not choose to run TCE courses at Grades 9 and 10, and commonly run their alternatives until the tertiary entrance stage of Grades 11 and 12.

While the importance ratings of ROAs ranged between a low of 51 percent for Paul and Peter to a high of 67 percent for Megan, TCE Certificates had a marginally wider range

from a low of 18 percent in Sally's case, to a high of 37 percent for Angelo. This accords with the interview data which shows a favouring of reporting processes that involve student negotiation, selection and input. Teachers and administrators who give considerable time and attention to the process of TCE criterion-based assessment are likely to attach more value to it than the 'recipient' stakeholders, namely, parents, employers and, in some cases, community workers who must liaise with training bodies and employment brokers.

The *outcomes* items can be viewed as holding some position along a continuum. At one end of the continuum are the more objective, externalised outcomes (such as *TCE certificates*), with the most intrinsic and subjective *outcomes* (such as *fulfilment*) at the at the other extreme. Accordingly, the more objective the curriculum *outcome*, the less importance stakeholders attached to it for MID students. The most external of the *outcomes*, the system-wide certificates of TCE courses, had, in the perception of stakeholders, the least importance for MID students.

Within a hypothetical external-to-internal continuum, the more personalised and intrinsic the *outcome*, the higher the rating from all stakeholders. Community and individual performance skills such as *work skills* (ranging from 76 percent to 99 percent) and *reading and writing to potential* (ranging from 78 to 91 percent) were more highly regarded in their curricular value than any measures used to report them.

The perceived importance of the most personal and internal of outcomes for MID students is clear. Over 90 percent of the combined Stakeholder groups rated the outcomes of *happiness* and *fulfilment* as "fairly" to "highly important" for each student in the MID cohort.

Curriculum Content

Data pertaining to this element of curriculum displayed a greater spread of ratings than did the *Outcomes* data. For the majority of items of curriculum *content* shown in Table 4, the rating percentages were lower than for the *outcomes* items. While eight *outcomes* items attracted greater than a 75 percent 'importance' rating for all six students, only three *content* items were rated "important" by stakeholders for all six of the students. On the basis of these data, it might be argued that stakeholders have attributed greater importance to curriculum ends than they have to curriculum means.

Table 4 **Percentage of all Stakeholders citing specific *content* as "fairly" or "very important" for each student.**

Students	Curriculum Content											
	Life Skills	Basic Reading & writing	Manual Skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Social skills	Health, phys and sport/Leisure	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
PAUL	80	86	76	61	63	84	87	9	30	59	55	32
MEGAN	100	97	87	61	80	87	93	21	39	59	42	5
ANGELO	92	89	78	57	79	87	92	24	51	82	39	26
SALLY	95	78	93	80	64	83	87	24	32	78	41	5
PETER	80	67	100	66	67	80	86	12	53	55	50	62
KEITH	89	75	88	64	72	70	83	17	86	89	66	80
(Total Stakeholders N=72)												

The *content* items of *Life skills* (including the item *Manual skills* which is described in the Questionnaire in terms of home-oriented "building, sewing and basic maintenance") and *Social Skills* were attributed the greatest importance by respondents. *Driver training, Gardening* and *Farm-work skills* were the least valued curriculum *content,* each being rated at below 50 percent 'importance' to MID students.

There was a common low rating of the *TCE main curriculum* given by all stakeholder groups, for all of the target students. The pattern parallels that of the *outcomes* data which saw *TCE certificates* receive the lowest rating of any item. It should be noted that it is not the entire TCE curriculum offering that is apparently failing to generate relevance or importance for MID students in stakeholders' eyes. Interview data indicated that the range of alternative syllabuses available potentially in secondary schools was wide and wholly appropriate to MID students' abilities. The difficulty appeared to lie in MID students' limited access to such courses.

It is difficult to ascertain from the data the 'importance' of several other items which, while displaying similar levels of importance for each of the students, do not represent the extremes of highly rated elements such as *Life skills*, nor the markedly low figures of TCE main curriculum. *Social skills*, as *content,* attracted a rating ranging from 70 to 87 percent 'importance'. This compared to the range of 86 to 97 percent for the item *Social strengths* in the *outcomes* data. *Social skills* was among the four most highly regarded *content* items.

Work-finding, *Pre-work training*, *Basic literacy*, and *Manual skills* were all given moderately high ratings by respondents across all six students. It is interesting to note that *Manual skills* were considered important by more than 87 percent of stakeholders for the two female students. There would appear to be no gender bias implicit in stakeholders' responses to that item. This could have positive implications for programs such as the Launceston Student Workshop. However, the low rating given to *Farm work skills* for both Sally and Megan raises the possibility that, at least for urban-based females, support may be difficult to find for rural vocational choices.

Craft skills attracted a median importance rating of 62 percent across target students. The remaining items of *Gardening skills (*median of 46 percent) and *Driver training* (45 percent) and *Farm-work skills* (median 27 percent and a range of 5 percent for Megan to 80 percent show wide ranges across individual target students. Though not necessarily indicating that these last items are unimportant for MID students, the data suggest that the relevance of some curriculum content areas will vary markedly from individual to individual and context to context.

Data pertaining to individual target students

While the percentages presented in Tables 3 and 4 give a picture of the total respondent stakeholders' rating of the *outcomes* and *content* elements, the data have also been viewed in relation to individual students and according to each of the identified stakeholder groups. *Outcomes* and *content* results, as they pertain to the individual focal students, are presented in Appendix VIII. The results are given as they were originally processed: as median ratings on a scale of 0 for "no importance at all"; 1 for "a small need"; 2, "desirable"; 3 "fairly important"; and 4 to indicate "of great importance." The "Overall" figure represents an average of those median figures. There were substantial differences shown at an individual level, for the *Driver training* and *farm-work skills* items. While Keith, the rurally situated student, attracted high ratings for these items (Appendix VIII); described in the vignette as city-based and irascible, Peter's involvement in *Driver training* was given a cautious, mid-range rating

by respondents; for Angelo who is described as having a well-developed work-ethic, pre-vocational preparation was highly rated. These data indicate that respondents saw curriculum as having both a particular relevance to individuals and an optimal balance in general availability to students such as those with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. The particularity of data for individual target students shows that the curriculum *outcomes* and *content* section of the questionnaire was sensitive to the characteristics of the target MID students; importantly there was no tendency by Stakeholders to give blanket responses for all six of the selected target students.

Stakeholder Group Influence.

Respondents were asked "Who *should* be the most influential of the stakeholders in the education of a Mildly Intellectually Disabled student?" They were asked to rank their own and other stakeholder groups in preferred order of "influence". Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5 "Who should be the most influential of stakeholders in the education of an MID student?"

Respondents	*n=*	***Stakeholder Groups, as rankedby respondent groups*** Student	Teachers	Employer	Parents	Taxpayers	Administrators	Community agents
Administrators	*7*	2	3	4	2	7	5	6
Community Agents	*13*	2	2	6	3	7	5	4
Parents	*14*	2.5	3	6	2	7	5	4.5
Employers	*3*	1	2	5	3	6	6	4
Student Peers	*5*	1	3	4	2	8	6	5
Taxpayers	*8*	2	2	6	2	7	5	4
Teachers	*22*	2	3	5	2	7	5.5	4
	N=72							
median ranking		2	3	4.5	2	7	5.3	5
ranking overall		1	3	6	1	7	5	4

Scale : 1=most influence, 7=least influence.

(Total Stakeholder respondents N=72)

The question included the opportunity to rank from 1 to 8, including the open-ended category of "other " which allowed respondents to classify themselves outside of the given stakeholder categories, and to nominate any new classifications they felt required listing. Only five of the 72 respondents gave "other " responses. Two of

these "other" responses indicated "Friend" as a stakeholder category. One indicated "Sister", another, "Relative" and one suggested "Publishers". Only one of the respondents from the Able Student Peer stakeholder group ventured "friend" as another category, thus making implicit claim to some 'preferred influence' ranking. With such small numbers of respondents taking the opportunity to venture an eighth ranking, Table 5 records seven, rather than eight positions.

The data show a clear preference amongst stakeholders for proximal influences; that is, *students themselves*, *parents*, *teachers*, and *community agents* were ranked as those stakeholder groups warranting the most influence in MID students' education. The more distal groups, i.e., *administrators*, *employers* and *taxpayers*, were ranked fifth, sixth and seventh, respectively. The rankings show a strong consistency across respondent groups. The only divergences to the clear pattern lie in Administrators' higher ranking of *employers* and in their lower ranking of *community agents*, and in community agents' placing of *parents* below *students* themselves in terms of preferred curriculum 'influence'. The data suggest that the closer the stakeholder is to the student, the greater the influence preferred from them among all stakeholders.

Range of Stakeholder Influence

Following the ranking of stakeholder groups by preferred influence, a probe question was included in the questionnaire asking respondents, "*How many* of the Stakeholder groups should be consulted in order to design appropriate curriculum for MID students?" Response options were given as *one*, *a few* or *all.* Of the 72 respondents, 51 (68 percent) answered in favour of *a few*, with the remainder, 25 (32 percent) favouring consultation with *all* stakeholder groups. There were no clearly variant within-group trends, indicating that the impression given by the data represents a broad consensus.

Viewed together the 'Preference' and 'Range' data indicate that designers can satisfy the consultative demands of curriculum deliberation without needing to engage *all* stakeholder groups. However, of the *few* stakeholder groups to be consulted, the message is unequivocally one favouring the involvement of proximal stakeholders. Parents are not simply to be informed of the processes and outcomes of planning; they must inform the process in an integral role. The position of employers in the picture should be interpreted with reservation, given the low response rate from that group. However, if the consistency apparent in inter-group responses is carried through for employers, their ranking below that of community agents not an unreasonable outcome.

Problematic Stages of Schooling

Respondents were asked to indicate at which stage of regular schooling they felt MID students were 'most likely' to be offered an appropriate curriculum (Table 6). Three (of seven) administrators queried the purpose of the item, one indicating that *"all stages of schooling should be able to offer appropriate programs."*

Table 6 Stage of Regular Schooling considered by Stakeholders most likely to offer an "appropriate curriculum"

Stakeholders	Stages of schooling (as Grade ranges)							
	K-P	1-2	3-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	TAFE	*total (n)*
Administrators		1	3	3				*7*
Community Agents	3	5	4					*12*
Employers		1			1			*2*
Parents		5	3	3	1	1	1	*14*
Student Peers		1	2				1	*4*
Taxpayers		4	4					*8*
Teachers		7	9	1				*17*
total	3	24	25	7	2	1	2	N=64
% of respondents	4.7	37.5	39.1	10.9	3.1	1.6	3.1	100

(TotalRespondents to the item =64)

The item saw eight respondents (5 of whom were teachers) refrain from answering. One of those teachers added a note that "all stages *should* offer an appropriate curriculum." Of those who did respond, a clear majority (76.6 percent) considered Grades 1 to 6 most likely to deal appropriately with the curriculum issue as it relates to MID students. Little confidence is evident among respondents for the early high school years. Community agents, teachers and even the relatively distal taxpayers showed strong reservations as to whether high school would provide the needed curriculum. Administrators had most confidence in the early high years, while parents gave high school and TAFE the strongest support. Secondary College Grades 11 and 12 were accorded the lowest likelihood of success in curricular terms.

Requests for Findings of the Study

An opportunity was given for respondents to request access to the findings of the survey to which they were contributing. Fifty-four (75 percent) requested feedback.

Table 7 presents the breakdown of results by stakeholder group. The data indicate a high level of interest in the issues inherent in the study. Apart from the unrepresentative sample of employer respondents, community agents showed the least interest in gaining feedback on the results.

Table 7 Respondents requesting findings of the study

Stakeholder Group	Requests	Group size	Proportion requesting (%)
Administrators	7	7	100
Community agents	7	13	53
Employers	1	3	33
Parents	9	14	64
Able peers	4	5	80
Taxpayers	6	8	75
Teachers	20	22	90
totals	54	N=72	75

An overview of the results from the Questionnaire to Stakeholders.

The most striking trend in the *content* data is the very low importance attributed to the *TCE main curriculum.* Combining these data with the poor importance rating in the *outcomes* data concerning the summary *TCE certificate* and interview data which highlighted the confusion in students and parents regarding the TCE structure, the resulting picture challenges the effectiveness for MID students of the curriculum elements and processes which occupy the largest focus in regular high school curriculums. Clear curriculum priorities are indicated by both the *outcomes* and *content* data. They lie in large in the domains of Life Skills and Social Skills, along with substantial attention to Pre-vocational experiences and outcomes.

Second Questionnaire: to Employers.

The second questionnaire was used to gather perceptions from a stakeholder group which is being given an increasing place in curriculum shaping through inter governmental policy measures such as those recommended by Finn (1990), Mayer (1992) and Carmichael (1992). As has been discussed in the *Methodology* chapter, the response rate from Employers of 20 percent to the first Questionnaire to Stakeholders did not allow any firm conclusions to be drawn regarding employers' requirements from, nor recommendations for, MID students' curriculums.

Response rate

Ninety questionnaires were distributed. Thirty -one were returned, yielding a response rate of 34 percent which, while considerably lower than the overall 63 percent response rate for the first Questionnaire to Stakeholders, was significantly greater than the 20 percent (N=3) furnished by that instrument from employers.

Data was sought concerning the number of people employed at each responding worksite. Of the 31 employers to respond, two had between one and three employees (6 percent of the total respondents), eight had between four and nine employees (26 percent), eleven employed between 10 and 49 people (35 percent) and nine had over 50 people employed (29 percent). One respondent failed to provide the information required. It was assumed, therefore, that at least 64 percent of the respondents had more than 10 employees.

Worker Characteristics Valued by Employers

Employers were asked to consider an array of work-related attributes and to rate them in terms of importance as skills for employment. This was to pertain to *all* employees, i.e., non-disabled and disabled (see Appendix IX for the full data tabulated from this study). The analysed data are shown in Table 7 on the following page, for comparison with data on worker characteristics from a US study [Carson, Huelskamp & Woodall (1991), cited by Berliner 1993].
In the current study, employers were asked to rate the importance of certain worker characteristics according to the scale of:
1 = *most important*; 2 = *fairly important*; 3 = *not very important*; and 4 = *of no importance*.

The personal/social attributes or characteristics were distinctly favoured by Employers in this study. Apart from the very small sub-category of employers with "1 to 3 persons employed" (n=2), the ratings were very similar across employers grouped by staff size (Appendix IX). The ranking of importance has been determined from both the median figures and the mean of aggregated ratings.

Table 8 Employers' Perceptions of most valuable "Skills for Employment", for all workers, with or without disabilities.

Skill for Employment	Employers' Median rating* of skills	Ranking of skills according to Employers' ratings	Top 5 in this study	Top 5 in Carson, Huelskamp & Woodall's US study (1991)	Skills common to top 5 in both studies.
Mathematics	3	(5)	• (equal 5th)		
Following Directions	4	(1)	•	•	•
Social Sciences	2	(6)			
Respect for Others	4	(4)	•	•	•
Computer Programming	2	(7)			
Honesty, Integrity	4	(1)	•	•	•
Foreign Language	1	(8)			
No Substance Abuse	3	(5)	• (equal 5th)	•	•
Natural Sciences	2	(7)			
Punctuality/attendance	4	(3)	•	•	•

N=30 ***rating scale: 1=most important; 2=fairly important; 3= not very important; 4=of no importance.***

When compared with the results of the US Carson et al. study (1991), it can be seen that the single divergence is in the esteem attached by employers to their employees' *Mathematics* capacities. Carson et al found *Mathematics* was not, relative to other worker traits and skills, highly valued by New York and Michigan employers. The five attributes in common among the compared results are in the non-academic domain. Achievement in the academic curriculum disciplines of *Social sciences*, *Computer programming*, *Natural Sciences*, and *Foreign Languages* were the least valued of the items ventured by the studies for consideration.

The rankings results from the 30 local employers were (in descending order of importance):

First (shared), *Honesty/ integrity* and *Following directions;*
Third, *Punctuality / attendance;*
Fourth, *Respect others*; and,
Fifth (shared), *No substance abuse* and *Mathematics.*

Although the sample of 30 from this study is not in an 'adequate' replication of the US study, the data convey a strongly similar image of the employers' preferences. The Tasmanian employers towards whom the target students are being directed for their working experience, and potentially their employment, hold the same high regard for life and social skills, over the more content-related skills closely identified with academic performance. It is to be expected that employers will have more tolerance of students in work experience who display immature levels of social and interpersonal development. However they are not likely to alter their 'on-the-job' emphasis on those most desired attributes. Successful applicants will be those perceived as most strong in those areas.

Stages of Schooling Problematic to MID Students

Respondents to the Questionnaire to Employers were asked the same question. Table 9 shows the data arrayed by employers' staff size.

Table 9 Stage of schooling considered by employers to be most likely to provide an appropriate curriculum for MID students

Employer Staff Size	Stages of Schooling							
	Kinder	Prep/1	Grades 3 to 6	Grades 7 to 8	Grades 9 to 10	Grades 11to12	TAFE	*n=*
1 to 4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
5 to 10	-	1	1	1	2	1	1	8
10 to 50	-	2	3	2	2	1	1	11
over 50	-	-	4	4	1	-	-	9
total	-	3	8	8	5	2	1	30
% of respondents		10	26.7	26.7	16.7	6.7	3.3	100

Employer respondents, N=30

Employers showed more confidence than respondents to the Stakeholder Questionnaire in the late primary and early high school years to provide appropriate programs to MID students. Equal numbers of the respondents (N=30) named Grades 3 to 6 and Grades 7

to 8 as "most likely " stages (26.7 percent in each case). Grades 9 to 10 were viewed by employers as having less likelihood of delivering an appropriate curriculum for MID students (16.7 percent). No other stages are attributed a substantial 'likelihood' of success. The greatest support for the Grades 3 to 8 came from the larger employers.

Table 10 shows the level of support among employers for an earlier start to work experience. While twelve of the respondents were "unsure" of their support for the concept, almost the same number (eleven) were unambivalently in favour of earlier work experience opportunities. Seven were not in favour of the proposal.

Table 10 "Work experience should begin at least 3 years before the end of MID students' schooling": Employers' views

Employer Staff Size	Employers' Responses			
	Yes	No	Unsure	totals *(n)*
1 to 4		1	1	2
5 to 10	2	2	3	7
10 to 50	5	2	4	11
over 50	4	2	4	10
Totals	11	7	12	29
% of respondents	36.7	23.3	40.0	100
(N=29)				

To assess the amount of time which could potentially be given in the workplace to MID students' Work experience, Employers were asked to state their preparedness to offer either 10 days' and/or 30 days' placement to MID students of various school Grades. Note, employers were informed in the question that the duration of placement may be broken into, for example, five day blocks.

As the Schools Board of Tasmania recently approved a TCE syllabus for Grades 11 and 12 which requires 120 hours of 'Work Placement', employers were also asked for their response to this level of involvement for MID students (also potentially offered in day-a-week or block modes). Tables 11 and 12 show the data from these two related questions.

The support among employers surveyed was greater for the Grade 12 MID students' Work Placement (61 percent) than for Grade 11 students (42 percent). In fact there is a clear trend to employers' favouring placement of older students in their workplace in preparation for open employment.

Table 11 **Preparedness of employers to offer work experience to MID students (of compulsory school age) by grade and duration of placement.**

Grade of Student	Employers supporting *10 days* work experience	Percentage of respondents	Employers supporting *30 days* Work experience	Percentage of respondents
Grade 7	5	16	0	-
Grade 8	6	19	0	-
Grade 9	12	38	4	12
Grade 10	19	61	4	12
(N=31)		*		

(*percentages tally over 100 % due to multiple responses)

Table 12 **Preparedness of employers to offer work experience placements to MID students (post compulsory school age) by grade**

Grade of Student	Employers prepared to offer 120 hrs "Work Placement" to MID students (*n*)	percentage of respondents*
Grade 11	14	41
Grade 12	19	63
(N=31).	*	*

(*percentages and employer totals tally over N and 100 % respectively due to multiple responses)

Employers were given space in the questionnaire to suggest "what preparation and/or on-site help" would be expected in their work sites from school personnel helping students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities to undertake work experience. The responses taken directly from the questionnaires included:

- *Discussion with staff and well planned out action plan;*
- *Regular reviews and visits, briefing on work practices and tasks that the student will be expected to do;*
- *Significant life-skills and pre-voc. skills to prepare for a work environment featuring inherent hazards and potrential dangers eg moving machinery, chemicals etc.;*
- *Knowledge of the students' capabilities;*

- *School personnel to be on-site on first day to assist student to adjust to new working environment, school personnel to talk to staff on Mild Intellectual Disabilities*;
- *Students will need to be taught standards eg grooming and punctuality and reasonable communication skills*; and
- *importance of punctuality and politeness* (of student, presumably).

There were also some disparaging remarks such as:

- *No person with even a mild disability could work in a joinery shop. It would be too dangerous*; and
- *This involves too dangerous chemicals that are critical to everyone.*

When asked in the questionnaire to state "Under what conditions would you employ an MID person?", employers were given six possible options to select from. They are listed below in Table 13 with the number of respondents shown as a percentage of respondent employers.

From this sample, the most popular condition under which employment of MID workers might occur is "a short trial period". Fifty percent of those who completed the item (N=28) favoured that condition. Seventeen percent would not, under any conditions, employ a person with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. One only of the respondents who was prepared to offer some level of work experience to MID students was not prepared under any conditions to offer them any chance of employment. This particular employer was concerned about the danger of his joinery workshop for the unknown quantity he perceived MID students to be.

Table 13 Employers perceptions of conditions required to employ a person with Mild Intellectual Disabilities.

Condition	Employers(*n*)	Percentage*
none	5	17
weekly visits from a job-trainer	8	28
under-award wages (value for work)	4	14
reduced working hours (pro-rata pay)	7	25
off-site training for part of each week	4	14
short 'trial period'	14	50
N=28		

(*percentages total over 100% due to multiple responses across several items)

The Employer data shows that there is a readiness in the employing community to give MID students a fair chance at gaining an awareness of working life. There is

nevertheless a level of scepticism in the employers' responses which indicates safety concerns are a potential barrier to both younger and/or more disabled students seeking work experience in machinery-based industries. For employers, the responsibility rests with schools and advocates to provide sufficient ongoing support to the trainees. Employers' comments show that increased pre-vocational partnerships between school and workplace are likely to be endorsed by employers with the proviso that the involvement of source schools is active and employers are not locked in to employing persons who prove to be under prepared or 'handicapped' in that particular context.

Summary of Results for Research Question 1

What are the curriculum needs of adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

In outcomes and content areas of curriculum, the highest priorities for MID students are, in the view of Stakeholders, for Life Skills and Social Skills, and to a lesser extent, Pre-vocational Skills. Stakeholders saw less focus being required in the Academic Skills domain. Curriculum outcomes were overall more strongly rated than were content items. The course content and certification associated with the TCE's main curriculum structure was not considered important by the majority of Stakeholders in respect of MID adolescents.

Interviews highlighted MID students' lack of Social Skills, a lack which isolates them in regular contexts and inhibits their effective transition to work and fulfilled community life. For MID students, the domain most inadequately addressed in schools is Social Skills. In 'deficit' terms, these appear clearly to be of greatest 'need'.

Curriculum processes feature strongly in proximal stakeholders' perceptions concerning the target students' learning programs. The processes required to meet MID students' needs are:

1. greater community referencing of learning (contextualisation);
2. ecological planning, delivery and assessment (cross-contextual collaboration); *and*
3. informal but purposive assessment (such as Records of Achievement) in those domains most needed in their curriculums.

Data for Research Question 2:

Are the curriculum priorities from proximal stakeholders consistent with those of the more distal stakeholders?

Congruence among Stakeholders' perceptions

The ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) has a key role in the study's conceptual framework. From this model, one would anticipate some greater importance to be attached by Stakeholders to the most proximal spheres of influence. These centre on the home but reach out, through schooling particularly, into the mesosystem or community level. Where the priorities of each level of the student's ecosystem are aligned in what is valued or considered appropriate for the student's curriculum, the relevance and outcomes of such curriculum elements is likely to be most powerful. The data, when tabulated to show the proportions of all stakeholders who value the same content and outcomes across all students' curriculums, can generate a strong picture of commonly and highly valued elements of the curriculum, as well as those that point up differences between proximal and distal Stakeholder groups.

Strong congruence exists in the data when arrayed according to focus students (see Tables 3 and 4). Tables 14 and 15, following, which show the data arranged according to stakeholder groups, are best able to demonstrate that substantial levels of similarity or agreement exist across stakeholder groupings. Among the several stakeholder groups, Administrators were the most supportive of the value of both the *TCE Certificate* and *Records of Achievement.* Community agents, such as carers and social workers, held less confidence in *Records of Achievement* (36 percent) and especially in the *TCE* (only 6 percent) as a curricular outcome needed by MID students.

The data indicate a high level of confidence expressed by teachers (72 percent) in the value to MID students of *Records of Achievement.* There is a marked difference between the relatively high rating of ROAs from administrators and teachers, and the less enthusiastic ratings from those stakeholders not engaged in either designing or implementing the curriculum or its reporting processes. Administrators were the most 'emphatic' in their responses. *None* of their respondent group gave either "fair" or "great" importance to the TCE main curriculum as regards MID adolescents.

Table 14 Curriculum outcomes : Percentage of stakeholders' responses rating items as " fairly important" or "very important"

RESPONDENTS	*No. of responses*	CURRICULUM OUTCOMES									
		TCE Certificates	Records of Achievement	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators *(n= 7)*	42	67	86	71	95	100	100	100	100	95	100
Community agents *(n=13)*	78	6	36	77	92	91	90	100	91	69	99
Parents *(n=14)*	82	17	52	87	96	98	94	100	99	93	95
Employers *(n= 3)*	18	50	83	100	100	100	83	100	100	100	83
Students peers *(n= 5)*	30	23	50	87	90	93	97	97	97	90	87
Taxpayers *(n= 8)*	48	27	54	88	86	96	94	100	81	88	92
Teachers *(n=22)*	132	21	72	86	95	92	92	96	95	77	95
Total Responses (ratings)	430	30	62	85	94	96	93	99	95	87	93
Total Stakeholders N=72		*Mean Percentages*									

Taxpayers' responses did not display a markedly divergent response pattern to that of the broader stakeholder groups' overall figures. This was true for both the *outcomes* data and *content* data.

There is some consistency of rating in Tables 15 and 16 across common-to-domain items in *outcomes* and *content*. For example, both items relating to TCE structure attracted low ratings. Conversely, items in the Life Skills and Social Skills domains gained very high importance ratings both as *content* and as *outcomes*. The high priority given by all stakeholders to the content and outcomes of the Life Skills and Social Skills domains has also been made clear in the data gathered from proximal stakeholders in the interviews. Emphasised again by the data from the Questionnaire to Stakeholders, these non-academic curriculum domains emerge as significant priorities for appropriateness in MID students' curriculums.

Life Skills were consistently rated highly for their importance to MID students. *Content* items of *Social Skills*, *Health/sport*, and *Manual skills* achieved similarly high ratings. These results are consistent with the data from the interviews.

Table 15 Curriculum Content : Percentage of Stakeholders' responses rating item s as " fairly important" or "very important"

RESPONDENTS	*No. of responses*	CONTENT											
		Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Social skills	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators *(n= 7)*	42	100	88	86	45	55	98	100	0	19	55	26	17
Community agents *(n=13)*	78	91	68	87	63	68	72	88	5	62	71	51	33
Parents *(n=14)*	82	86	93	88	63	83	86	90	26	51	73	44	39
Employers *(n= 3)*	18	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	0	100	83	100	100
Students peers *(n= 5)*	30	80	53	80	40	87	67	83	17	30	77	70	43
Taxpayers *(n= 8)*	48	85	85	92	79	65	79	77	15	15	65	60	33
Teachers *(n=22)*	132	89	86	87	73	70	85	90	29	29	73	43	31
Total Responses (ratings)	430	90	82	89	66	75	84	90	13	44	71	56	42
Total Stakeholders N=72		*Mean Percentages*											

The data in Table 15 clearly show that the *TCE main curriculum* is attributed the least importance of all content items, and that this low rating is expressed by each of the stakeholder groups. The most interesting result is that none of the administrator respondents felt that the MID students would have their needs met at an important level by academic elements of the TCE subject range. Teachers had the most positive opinion of the TCE core subjects (29 percent of teacher respondents rated the item at "fair" or "great " importance). Overall the item attracted an average of only 15 percent importance rating.

Sixty-nine percent of community agents valued literacy outcomes as of fair to great importance. This contrast from the overall average of 85 percent could be explained by the community-referenced, interpersonal focus of community agents (such as social workers and guidance personnel). Community agents' roles are predominantly to facilitate domestic and social coping by MID students' (and their 'significant others'.) This result would agree with community agents' high rating of *Social Skills* (86 percent) in step with parents and teachers (both 90 percent). Teachers, who gave literacy skills a slightly higher rating at seventy-seven percent, saw more importance in the basic skills. These are critical to maximum curriculum involvement by MID students in their classrooms. Ninety-three percent of parents rated literacy outcomes as important to

MID students, re-emphasising the functional literacy and numeracy elements so frequently referred to in the interviews.

Pre-vocational Skills in *Pre-work training* (such a LSW and work experience) and *Work-finding* (as may be developed through subjects such as Careers and Personal Development) were generally rated as the next most important curriculum content. However, only half the administrators respondent group rated *Pre-work training* highly. Outside the relatively low response from administrators, *Pre-work training* was rated as of substantial importance (71 percent) to MID students. Each end of the proximal/distal spectrum was agreed in attributing to the *TCE main curriculum* the *least* importance for MID students. The 'corresponding' curriculum outcome item of *TCE* [summary] *certificates* was given low ratings by all but the "Administrators" group.

The Knowledge Base of Respondents

In the event that there were discrepancies between the knowledge bases of stakeholder groups, differences or congruence among respondents might be explained as products of misinformation or ignorance rather than reason or experience. In order to ascertain the level of informedness in respondents prior to their reading of the background information contained in the Questionnaire to Stakeholders, an item was included in the which asked *"How aware were you of such children before reading this questionnaire?"* The response options were: "not at all", "a bit", "adequately" and '"very". Table 16 presents the data, by Stakeholder group.

Table 16 Stakeholders' awareness of MID children

	Awareness levels			
Stakeholder Group	"very"	"adequate"	"a bit"	"not at all"
Administrators	6	1	0	0
Community Agents	8	3	2	0
Employers	2	0	1	0
Parents	7	5	2	0
Able peers	0	3	2	0
Taxpayers	1	5	2	0
Teachers	14	6	2	0
totals	38	23	11	0
percentages	53	32	15	0

(N=72)

Of the respondents (N=) 72, 53 percent (*n* =38) felt they were*"very* aware, 32 percent (*n*=23) were *adequately* aware and 15 percent (*n*=11) were *a bit* aware. No respondents claimed to be *not at all* aware.

Eighty-five percent of respondents stated they were *very* or *adequately* aware of students with MID before answering the questionnaire. Stakeholder groups displayed a consistently high level of awareness. Given that, with the exception of taxpayers, respondents were chosen for their direct or indirect involvement with MID students, it is, perhaps, to be expected that such a proportion of respondents would self-report a strong awareness of MID students. It can be asserted from this high level of self-perceived 'awareness' on the parts of respondents and the substantial consistency across Stakeholders' ratings that the data are reliable.

Summary of Results for Research Question 2

Are the curriculum recommendations of proximal stakeholders consistent with those of more distal stakeholders ?

There is substantial agreement in the perceptions of all stakeholders groups and individual stakeholder respondents with regard to the prioritising of MID students' curriculum needs, in particular to the elements of *most* importance. The data showed consistently high rating of the Life Skills and Social Skills domains. Pre-vocational Skills are rated marginally lower but are nevertheless consistent across proximal to distal groupings.

There is also general concordance (among the surveyed respondent groups) that the more *proximal* the Stakeholder, the greater should be their influence in MID students' educations. Nevertheless, the majority of Stakeholders surveyed (N=72) favoured a sharing of influence from among a "few" (68 percent), or "all" (25 percent), indicating support for a collaborative perspective on planning and implementation of MID students' curriculum.

It is in the processes of assessment and reporting of curriculum outcomes for MID students that the greatest differences exist among Stakeholders. Proximal Stakeholders see little value for MID students in the present formal summary certification through the TCE (Parents 17 percent; Teachers 21 percent), while Administrators (67 percent) attributed importance to the TCE's certificate.

Data for Research Question 3:

Can an appropriate mix of curriculum domains be determined for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

The research question was approached principally through similar items in the Questionnaires to (a) Stakeholders and (b) to Employers. Further school-level data was obtained as an ancillary exercise given to teachers who were interviewed. Their task was to estimate the domain emphases given by teachers in their schools to the subjects most commonly undertaken by Year 7 and 9 MID students. The data from the questionnaires are presented first in Tables 17 and 18 as the 'preferred' domain engagements for MID adolescents.

a) Domain Data from the Questionnaire to Stakeholders

The Stakeholders were asked to specify "how many lessons" out of an MID student's weekly lesson total of 25 hours, should be spent on the curriculum domains of "Daily living skills" (including social skills and independence skills) and "Pre-vocational Skills" (described as 'workplace-type skills').

Table 17 Stakeholders' responses regarding "How many hours of an MID student's high school week should be spent developing *Daily Living Skills* and *Pre-vocational Skills"*

Domains as hours/25 per week		Stakeholder groups								Percentage for each domain "mix"
DAILY LIVING SKILLS	*PRE-VOCATIONAL*	Administrators	Community Agents	Employers	Parents	Student Peers	Taxpayers	Teachers	*Total*	%
15	*10*	2	1	1	7	1	3	4	19	27.9
10	*15*		4	2	5	1	1	2	15	22.1
10	*10*		3			2	3	5	13	19.1
10	*5*	1	3		2			2	8	11.8
5	*10*	2					1	3	6	8.8
20	*5*		2					2	4	5.9
5	*15*	1							1	1.5
5	*5*	1						3	1	1.5
15	*5*							1	1	1.5
									68	100

Total Stakeholder respondents N=68

Respondents could suggest between one and twenty hours per curriculum domain. The balance was assumed to fall to the rest of the curriculum, essentially the 'Academic' domain.

The design of this question in the Questionnaire to Stakeholders was less effective than its counterpart in the Questionnaire to Employers, which was constructed following the gathering of data from the first Stakeholder questionnaire. Employers were given four discrete domains through which to prioritise curriculum time. Nevertheless, the three-way split offered to the broader stakeholder group (taking Academic Skills to be those not represented in either 'Daily living skills' or 'Pre-vocational skills') provided a forceful image of stakeholders' preferences.

Exactly 50 percent of respondents recommended a mix which occupied the *whole* of an MID student's week. Parents, teachers and community agents contributed most strongly to that weighting. The next most frequently suggested mix occupied 20 of the 25 hours of schoolweek curriculum time. Teachers and community agents accounted for most of those. Only 1.5 percent of respondents 'allowed' sufficient of the 25 hours for academic domain subjects (which must come from the 'remainder') to occupy a majority of the MID students' weeks. Seventy eight (78) percent of stakeholders recommended ratios that left five hours or fewer (i.e., 20 percent) of the week for academic lessons. The data showed perhaps the strongest indication of any of the questionnaire items that, in the perception of stakeholders, the curriculum needs of MID adolescents are not adequately addressed by the secondary curriculum undertaken by the great majority of students.

b) Domain Data from the Questionnaire to Employers

Employers gave responses to a similar question. The data are shown in Table 18. As suggested earlier, the "domain mix" question to the Employers was more elaborated for the respondents than its equivalent in the Questionnaire to Stakeholders.

In the 'Employer' instrument, the distinction was directly made between Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills. A 'forced choice' was given to Employers to distribute the students' 25 hours among those four domains. The working definitions given to Employers for each domain are reproduced with the Employer Questionnaire proforma (see Appendix II).

Table 18 Hours per week Recommended by Employers MID Students in Four Skill Domains (25 hours total)

Employer (Staff Size)	Skill Domains			
	Life Skills	Pre-Vocational	Academic	Social Skills
1 to 3 employees *(n=2)*	10	5	5	5
	10	5	5	5
4 to 9 employees *(n=8)*	10	0	5	10
	5	5	10	5
	10	5	5	5
	5	10	5	5
	5	5	5	10
	10	5	2	5
	2	2	20	2
	10	5	5	5
10 to 49 employees *(n=11)*	10	0	10	5
	10	5	5	5
	10	5	5	5
	10	5	5	5
	15	0	0	10
	5	5	5	10
	10	5	0	10
	5	5	10	5
	5	5	2	10
	5	10	5	5
	5	5	10	5
over 50 employees *(n=8)*	10	5	2	10
	5	5	10	5
	10	10	2	5
	10	5	5	5
	10	5	5	5
	5	10	5	5
	10	5	5	5
	10	5	5	5
	Life Skills	**Pre-voc**	**Academic**	**Social Skills**
Mode	**10**	**5**	**5**	**5**
Average	8.2	5.1	5.6	6.1
Total Employers N=29				

The data show a mode of 10, 5, 5, and 5 hours for Life Skills, Pre-vocational Skills, Academic Skills and Social Skills, respectively. This modal "mix' closely reflects the mean of each domain's allocations. Though there was no intra-group trend in the domain mixes suggested by employers, the overall trend was clear, with Life Skills requiring the greatest emphasis in the week's 25 hours of 'lesson time'. Mean hours recommended for the other domains are fairly evenly distributed between the other

three domains, with Social Skills identified as warranting marginally more time in the preferred curriculum domain balance for MID adolescents.

In order to compare the domain mix data from the Employer and broad Stakeholder Quesionnaires to the school curriculums of the target students, more information was needed. These data were obtained following the last round of interviews teachers of the six MID target students. The fourth research question concerning adjustments towards an appropriate curriculum was addressed using a comparison of MID students' school curriculums with the domain data of the two Questionnaires.

Summary of Results for Research Question 3

Can an appropriate mix of curriculum domains be determined for MID students?

The study sought from Stakeholders their estimations of what an optimal balance of domains would comprise for MID adolescents. This data corroborated data the "most needed" curriculum outcomes, content and processes.

The clearest data concerning the relative "value" to MID students of the four identified domains comes from the Questionnaire to Employers. Mean and modal patterns showed Life Skills and Social Skills were considered most important, while Academic Skills and Pre-vocational Skills were less important. Of a 25 hour school week, the median ratios were, 8.1: 6.1: 5.6 : 5.1 for Life Skills, Social Skills, Academic Skills, and Pre-vocational skills, respectively.

Data from teachers' estimates concerning domain emphases given in MID students' curriculums show that there is a substantial discrepancy between the optimal recommended by Employers and that reflected in students' actual curriculums.

MID students whose programs included more of the non-academic skills, in particular those who maintained an involvement in the Launceston Student Workshop and community tutoring programs, had satisfactory programs (by implication, 'appropriate') in the eyes of those proximal Stakeholders interviewed, including the students themselves.

Data for Research Question 4:

What adjustments are indicated to make the curriculum more appropriate for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

The fourth research question was approached through consideration of three related sets of data. The first have been introduced in response to the previous research question. These were the curriculum domain perceptions of stakeholders in general, and those of employers, in particular. The second data gathering process explored the actual curriculum as practised in schools. The third involved the drawing together of results from the three previous research questions. The combined meaning of the three results form a conclusion to this chapter and lead into the fifth chapter of the thesis, the *"Discussion and Conclusion".*

Teachers' perceptions of domains emphasised in secondary subjects undertaken by MID students

To ascertain teachers' perceptions of how the schools' curriculums in practice emphasise or, conversely, underplay the various curriculum domains, teachers who were interviewed as part of the study were asked how teachers in their schools' subjects at Grades 7 and 9 dealt with both academic and non-academic curriculum domains. To achieve a quantified measure of the time occupied by the various domains within schools' curriculums, teachers were given a 'curriculum pie' to divide or apportion, subject by subject. Only subjects such as those undertaken typically by MID adolescents in their schools were to be considered.

Teachers (N=11) in three regular high schools were asked, as an adjunct to their interview, to record their estimations of the emphases they perceived being given by teachers in their school to the four curricular skill domains of *Academics, Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills.* The 'weightings' were apportioned by respondents as percentages. The two years of Grade 7 (pre-TCE) and Grade 9 (TCE) were considered. The subjects are drawn from the several school curriculums of the teachers and do not represent the range of any one high school (or secondary section of K-10 schools.) The data, presented in separate tables, show mean percentages for the aggregated responses.

The data contained in Tables 19 and 20 show the wide variation in teachers' treatment of the curriculum domains according to their subjects. The predominant emphasis in the curriculum clearly is upon the Academic Skills domain.

Table 19 Domains as emphasised by MID students' Grade 7 teachers, as perceived by interviewed teachers

Grade 7 subject	Teachers responding to item (*n*)	Emphasis in schools given to each Curriculum Domain (as relative percentage)			
		Academic Skills	Social Skills	Life Skills	Pre-voc. skills
English/Language	*11*	58	19	12	11
Maths	*11*	22	13	45	20
Studies of Society	*11*	78	10	11	2
Science	*11*	81	19	0	0
Technology	*10*	29	9	37	25
Health/Pers.Dev't	*10*	11	24	42	23
Phys. Ed.	*11*	0	44	45	11
Computer use	*9*	72	2	7	19
Arts	*11*	33	16	34	17
LOTE	*6*	88	10	2	0
Teachers responding **N=11**					

Grade 7 subjects which show the most similar emphases to the 'desired' pattern of the questionnaire data were *Maths* and *Health and Personal Development.* Two subjects, *Technology* and *Art* were close to the 'desired' pattern but for a (relatively small) overemphasis on Academic Skills.

Table 20 on the following page shows that, at Grade 9 level, *Technology* curriculum was identified as having moved further still to an academic domain emphasis. Translated into hours, the domain percentages of only three subjects at Grade 9 stage conform to the pattern of domain engagement recommended by the respondents to the two questionnaires. They are the two modified syllabuses of *Maths for Living* and *Skills and Strategies for Learning,* and the curriculum elements encompassed by *Health and Personal Development.*

Table 20 **Domains as emphasised by MID students' Grade 9 teachers, as perceived by interviewed teachers**

Grade 9 subject	Teachers responding to item (*n*)	Emphasis in schools given to each Curriculum Domain (as relative percentage)			
		Academic Skills	Social Skills	Life Skills	Pre-voc. skills
English (115)	*9*	56	18	16	12
Maths for Living	*9*	13	13	59	15
Skills for Learn'g	*7*	23	14	47	16
Studies of Society	*11*	73	12	11	4
Science	*11*	77	18	3	2
Design in Wood	*9*	36	10	29	25
Health/Pers.Dev't	*11*	11	26	39	24
Phys. Ed.	*11*	3	39	51	9
Computer use	*7*	76	4	8	13
Basic Catering	*6*	14	26	36	24
Art	*8*	35	20	28	17
LOTE	*5*	86	14	0	0
Teachers responding **N=11**					

One target student's timetable analysed against the data of Tables 19 and 20

The weekly timetable of one of the MID target students, Angelo, has been broken down to show the domain adjustments required for a more appropriate domain balance. 'Angelo's' school week in his Grade 9 year is given as the basis of comparison in Table 21 :

Table 21 "Angelo's" timetable analysed by domain estimations of teachers

MID students' Grade 9 Subjects	Subject total mins/wk	Teachers' Curriculum Domain estimations (as minutes/week)			
		ACADEMIC	SOCIAL	LIFE	PRE-VOC
Basic Catering	180	25	47	65	43
Design in wood	180	65	18	52	45
Skills & Strat/learning	180	41	25	85	29
Social Science	135	99	16	15	5
Science	135	104	24	4	3
English	135	76	34	22	16
Maths for living	135	18	18	80	20
Phys. Ed	90	3	35	46	8
Craft	90	32	18	25	15
Health, Work & Living	90	10	23	35	22
Free	[less 150]				
total minutes	1350	470	249	426	205
Employers' recommendations		302	329	444	275
Adjustment implied		*less* **168**	*more* **80**	*more* **18**	*more* **70**
		Academic	Social	Life Skills	Pre-voc

The standard used in Table 21 to determine the implied adjustments is the ratio of domain engagement from the Questionnaire to Employers. Were the more extreme (but less clear) recommended ratios of the Stakeholder Questionnaire used, the trend seen in Table 17 would be more exaggerated in favour of Life Skills, Pre-vocational Skills and Social Skills. On the basis of the 'ratio' ensuing from the employers, the adjustments required to achieve an optimal balance for one of the MID students are:

- 168 minutes less on Academic Skills (or a reduction of around 36 percent);
- 80 minutes more on Social Skills (or an increase of 32 percent);
- 18 minutes more on Life Skills (or an increase of 3 percent); and
- 70 minutes more on Pre-vocational Skills (an increase of 25 percent).

The adjustments indicated relate to one MID student's regular weekly timetable. The school timetables for the other integrated Grade 9 MID students do not vary greatly from that of 'Angelo'. Hence, from an overlaying of the teachers' estimates of domain

emphases and data from the questionnaires, it is possible to project that broadly similar (by no means identical) 'adjustments' are required for an appropriate balance in students' curriculums.

While time has been presented as one way of quantifying the relative attention devoted to the domain, it is understood, of course, that 'adjustments' to address any mismatch are more complex than teachers simply giving more or less time to a domain. Any curriculum subject will have all four domains potentially addressed or utilised in any one lesson. It is likely that the percentages of each domain to be reduced or increased are figures with which teachers in particular can better relate.

From the example of 'Angelo's' timetable, provided in Table 21, the *Academic Skills* domain is receiving a disproportionate emphasis. Academic Skills are the only domain being 'overemphasised', by approximately 36 percent. Adjustments in time and/or attention to the other domains will need to come *from* the academic domain *to* the others.

It is interesting to note the Life Skills domain presents in Angelo's timetable as at near 'optimal' level. Although Life Skills are of highest priority or 'most needed' in the curriculums of MID students, the data do not show that in 'Angelo's' example Life Skills learning opportunities are *missing*. In fact, it would appear his school curriculum is providing very close to what stakeholders have pictured as an 'appropriate' emphasis of Life Skills. No significant adjustment would appear necessary from this example.

The two remaining domains clearly are under emphasised. The data suggest that Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills domains be increased by 32 percent and 25 percent, respectively. It is these domains towards which attention would need to be diverted, specifically from the Academic Skills domain. In its most simple, subject-defined interpretation, MID students may either have their academically focussed subjects (such as science and social science) replaced by subjects which have greater Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills emphases, *or* have greater emphasis given to content and outcomes of the under-represented domains in academic subjects as they presently meet them.

To pursue the example of 'Angelo', it is pertinent to reflect that his actual educational program has him participating every second week in training at the Launceston Student Workshop. The adjustment that such a participation brings to his overall curriculum, in terms of domain emphases, would favour Pre-vocational Skills, Social Skills and to a lesser extent, Life Skills, while necessarily limiting the academic focus which apparently dominates his ordinary school week. For 'Angelo' this would seem to be a

wholly appropriate form of adjustment, particularly if attention is given in the LSW program to Academic content and outcomes. Four TCE syllabuses are currently pursued at the LSW. Interview data from the director suggests there is adequate opportunity for staff to target TCE subjects' criteria in order to increase the number of course completions and so enhance the value of MID students' Schools Board exit statements. With the co-operation of base school staff, a sufficient emphasis can be given to Academic Skills for an overall domain balance in an MID student's curriculum.

Data from the interviews have suggested that, for a curriculum to offer students the needed content, and outcomes, two processes are particularly fundamental to an appropriate curriculum adjustment:

(i) teachers' interpretation and differentiation, emphasising outcomes priorities which may lie outside of the academic domain; and

(ii) the availability of contextual alternatives which afford MID students access to community-based learning; (realistic contexts were perceived as most enhancing MID students' Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational learning

Summary of Results for Research Question 4

What adjustments are indicated to make the curriculum more appropriate for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities?

The results show that when domain engagement recommended by stakeholders for MID students' curriculum is compared with the domains emphasised by the MID students' classroom teachers, the balance created is far from 'optimal'. It is thought that academic outcomes and the content targeted to those outcomes occupy disproportionate time (in the sense of emphasis or attention) in those mixed ability classes. Life Skills, though of highest importance, is shown to be more adequately represented in MID students' curriculums than either Social or Pre-vocational Skills.

To 'redress' the perceived imbalance, attention given by teachers to the Academic Skills domain will need to be redirected to the Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills domains.

Conclusion to the *Results* chapter

The analysed data were drawn from the broad range of stakeholders, each group having its own role and interest in the education of the focal subjects. However, the data have shown a general congruence in their perceptions of MID adolescents' curriculum needs. The students' curriculums have been described according to four domains, with stakeholders attributing the highest priority or importance to curriculum elements of the Life Skills and Social Skills domains. Pre-vocational Skills have been shown to have high importance also, but employers' responses have emphasised that workers' characteristics most critical to successful employment lie in adaptive or personal capabilities, rather than in cognitive or rational capabilities.

Academic Skills were revealed to have the most problematic importance within MID adolescents' overall curriculum. The *content* and *outcomes* of the *TCE main curriculum* were attributed little value for MID students. *Records of Achievement* were held in substantially higher regard than the summary transcript of the *TCE.* Interviews suggested the TCE's transcript failed to account for the most critical accomplishments of MID students which were in the Life Skills and Social Skills domains.

From the interview data, several curriculum processes were considered by proximal stakeholders as necessary in meeting MID adolescents' learning needs. In particular the contextualising of curriculum was seen as heightening relevance, motivation and learning transfer. Non-school programs were highly valued for some MID students, but the overall curriculum depended for maximum effectiveness on school and non-school collaboration in delivery and assessment.

The adjustments indicated as necessary for a more appropriate curriculum centred on teachers shifting their emphasis from Academic Skills to the other domains. While Life Skills were perceived as receiving near-to-optimal attention in MID students' curriculums, Social Skills and Pre-vocational skills were under-represented. Approximately one third of the time or focus given in MID students' curriculums to Academic Skills content and outcomes would need to be redirected to Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills.

The following chapter, the *Discussion,* broadens the study's interpretation of adjustments implied in the results. Towards designing and providing appropriate curriculum for MID adolescents, implications are drawn in two directions: theory and practice.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter the implications of the results are directed first towards the study's conceptual framework. From the adjustments implied for an appropriate domain mix, an example is given of how the results might be expressed in a target student's Grade 9 secondary school timetable. Implications for action are then detailed for several stakeholder groups in the curriculum context of the targeted students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. The chapter concludes with several criteria by which educators might assess the appropriateness of a curriculum made available for MID students.

Implications for the conceptual framework and broader theory

Wolcott (1990; 1994) has suggested that qualitative studies generalise to theory, rather than to the population. As this study is primarily qualitative in nature, conceptual meanings have been inferred from the results. Four notions in particular have guided this study's investigation of appropriate curriculum for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities:

First, the social ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) has influenced the study's conceptual framework mainly through the methodology, although the results have shown that links between school and community needed by MID students have the potential to reconceptualise the role of the school curriculum.

Secondly, the early formulation of the problem was most influenced by Brennan's (1985) construct of time making curriculum necessary through selection. Brennan saw functional and contextual learning as the contending elements of a special needs curriculum, and that priorities must be determined within them. The relative importance for MID students of certain curriculum content and outcomes thus became the key focus of attention in the data gathering methods used.

Third, the division of curriculum content and outcomes into four domains has been critical to the configuration of the data and the results. The four domains of Academic Skills, Life Skills, Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills were an amalgam of several

perspectives drawn from the field of school-to-post-school transition (see Figure 2.2, p. 49). By analysing curriculum by domain rather than by subject area alone, the notion of curriculum differentiation can be approached as a matter of 'emphasis' as well as one of 'selection'.

Fourth, as the study progressed the *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling's* (1994) goals of "Access, Participation and Outcomes" (p. 6) have expanded the rationale for the study's interpretation of curriculum appropriateness. The document is the first national policy initiative to address disadvantage specifically through *curriculum*.

The ecological perspective of curriculum purpose

The validity claims of this largely qualitative study rely most upon the ecological aspect of the research design. It reached a broad range of stakeholders with a shared focus directed to six specific but representative curriculum experiences of MID adolescents. The more objective and quantitative approach of the questionnaires gave a comparison of distal-to-proximal viewpoints. This data was triangulated (Mathison, 1988) further with interview data that drew upon the actual curriculum reflections of the focal students and key proximal stakeholders. The data as such had both subjective depth and objective breadth to describe MID students' curriculum needs from each of Thomson's (1987) three perspectives (instrumental, normative and fundamental).

The ecological perspective would appear to be a rich conceptual framework through which to approach many of the issues raised in the study: MID students' locus of control; curriculum negotiation and student choice/decision making regarding curriculum; cross-contextual assessment of learning; transfer and generalisation of learning; and transitional community adjustment. The relative permeability of layers in MID students' ecosystems and the consistency of vision shared by stakeholders from a proximal to distal position might be argued as critical to the meeting of the student's curriculum needs. The strong impression from the interviews with stakeholders was that the school curriculum of MID students should be referenced closely to the personal and societal dimensions of community adjustment (cf. Halpern, 1989).

Brennan's "Curriculum for Special Needs

While Holly (1963) proposed that curriculum as a deemed good was disenfranchising of learners, Brennan accepted that there was a core and periphery (Tansley & Gulliford, 1960) to curriculum. Unlike the curriculum design theories of Lawton (1975) and Skilbeck (1982) which held that academic and cultural disciplines

comprised the essential common core of the curriculum, Brennan saw functional and contextual learning as the core elements of curriculum for the broad band of students with special needs. In Brennan's model (see Figure 2.1, p.31), "functional learning" (i.e., life skills which incorporated functional academics) was more critical to the core of a special skills curriculum than was "contextual learning" (which included social and relationship skills). This was because Brennan believed functional elements could be made explicit and taught in any context, whereas contextual learning was situation specific and that criteria for curriculum inclusion was "not so rigorous at the context level" (p. 71). In relative terms, Brennan's conceptualising of curriculum placed contextual elements in the 'periphery'.

This project's results challenge this construct. They show that while Life Skills and Social Skills are both highly valued for MID students, they cannot be stratified into higher or lower levels. The interview and survey responses of stakeholders' have shown that Social Skills are of critical importance to MID adolescents at each of the three 'needs' views put forward by Thomson (1987):

(i) Social Skills are of *fundamental* need to the target students because they predicate participation, communication and self awareness;

(ii) They have been shown to be of *normative* need for adaptive behaviour assessments which are the more authentic assessment complement of psychometric measures of ability; and

(iii) The development of Social Skills is seen by teachers and employers as of high *instrumental* need for MID students' outcomes in terms of attaining employment and independent citizenship.

Brennan's (1987) claim that social learning was contextual and might not be made explicit in curriculum planning is clearly challenged by the results of this study. Teachers and parents emphasised that collaborative planning and assessment across contexts (school and non-school learning environments) were critical to high priority outcomes in each of the non-academic curriculum domains. For all six of the focal MID students there is congruence across stakeholder groups opinions that show the high 'need' for Social Skills is common to the cohort of MID adolescents . As such it warrants being accounted for manifestly in an appropriate curriculum for MID students. On the contrary, it is the Academic Skills domain which has been shown to be context-restricted (i.e., to the present school curriculum structure) and, in all stakeholder groups' views, relatively unimportant to the transition of MID students to adulthood.

Brennan was critical of the focus given by researchers to the social adaptive effects of integration. This he considered detracted from theory development in *curriculum* for 'special needs'. The results, however, have shown the social adaptive needs of integrated students to be relatively neglected in the prevalent secondary curriculum by comparison with functional or Life Skills learning.

Commonwealth agencies serving adult persons with disabilities routinely include adaptive skills in their assessment of clients' ability and hence eligibility for support and/or program entry under the Commonwealth's 1992 *Disability Reform Package.* The most recent definition published by the American Association of Mental Retardation (1992) makes clear the direct link between 'ability' and students' Social and Life Skills:

> Mental retardation refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterised by significant sub-average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: communication, self care, home living skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work. (cited by Ashman, 1994, p. 438)

Employers approached through the survey have been shown to value most highly attributes which align to the AAMR description.

It can be concluded that curriculum research 'must' take account of Social Skills needs and make explicit recommended content and outcomes in that domain, if curriculum theory and practice are to be relevant to the ecological realities of lives of MID adolescents' lives.

Four Domains for Curriculum Deliberation

Brandwein (1977) proposed that "the prime purpose of planning a curriculum is the reduction of complexity" (p. 2). In order to solicit and then to interpret the perceptions of stakeholders regarding curriculum content and outcomes, it was necessary to conceptualise the curriculum in such a way that allowed an economy of variables without rendering the true whole meaningless. While there were inevitably ambiguities in respondents' minds, it is probable that the domains are more recognisable to the broad range of stakeholders than would be the case with alternative "reductions" such as the five capabilities of "rational, creative, kinaesthetic, linguistic and personal" (DEA, Tasmania, 1991a; 1993a). The reduction of the curriculum to four domains facilitated data that could be interpreted readily for practical application at a school level. The construct further allowed interview data to be coded qualitatively in the same operational terms as the more quantitative estimations that teachers made of the

emphases given to the various domains in syllabuses undertaken in MID students' actual secondary curriculums.

Access, Participation and Outcomes: Curriculum for Equity

Access and Participation

The *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling (NSES)* intends that the "intermeshing of State's equity goals ... with the equity goals of the Commonwealth, should lead to a national approach to meeting the needs of all students" (MCEETYA, 1994, p.3). The Tasmanian Department's paper on the *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools,* (DEA, Tasmania, 1994a) states the "placement of students with disabilities in regular schools is the preferred educational option in Tasmania" (p. 1). So stated, *access and participation* are interpreted for the Tasmanian community as meaning that to "the fullest extent possible, students with disabilities should be educated in the company of their age peers *while also being provided with curriculum and support that effectively meet their needs*" (ibid, emphasis added).

Implied in the perceptions of stakeholders is that *access* is not in itself sufficient to justify the inclusion of disabled students' in regular schools. In the regular contexts of this study, slower learners were shown to face social and academic demands that highlight, rather than diminish their 'handicap'. Without an adequate emphasis on social skills learning, the curriculum itself becomes a handicapping agent to the regular school context. Access to a curriculum which will "effectively meet their needs" (DEA, Tasmania, 1994a, p. 1) is, in the light of the results, the more important rationale of the Tasmanian policy's introductory paragraph.

The role of the school curriculum structure has emerged as central to the *access* students have to an appropriate curriculum. The timetabling and staffing of non-academic syllabuses and the off-campus delivery of curriculum is still managed by the school system. Importantly, however, stakeholders responding to the study did not expect schools to provide *all* of the 'most important' curriculum elements for MID students. Contextualised, community-based learning is as much needed in terms of *access* as is access to relevant in-school experiences. Hence the tacit notion of 'access' advanced by the *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling* should not guide research in a single direction towards mainstream or regular curriculum structures. The results of the research conducted here are clear in their support for the contextualising and 'ross-contextualising'of curriculum for MID students, among others for whom curriculum priorities lie outside the Academic domain.

This study has raised a notion of *participation* as being more associated with curriculum content and the shape of the undertaken curriculum than it is with educational settings or schooling completion rates. Course or syllabus design in Tasmania is done with particular ranges of students targeted expressly by each syllabus or program. The availability to MID students of purposively designed courses with optimal 'mixes' of domains has been shown to rely on three factors:

(i) the overall *time* given over to appropriate courses in the regular curriculum structure;

(ii) the *capacity of teachers* to teach several levels of syllabus within non-elective subject areas such as Maths and Social Science; *and*

(iii) the *collaborative practices* of stakeholders across curriculum areas and learning contexts to maximise the planning and assessment value of students' programs.

Given that the great majority of stakeholders believed the primary years were more likely to provide an appropriate curriculum for MID students, it is fair to assume that secondary teachers have been slower to accommodate cross-curricular and mixed ability processes than their primary counterparts. Teachers interviewed in this study appeared to be fairly confident in their own differentiation capacities, although they were not equally confident of other teachers' skills and attitudes in the non-academic domains. There was also a perception that the teachers of academically centred learning areas had a more difficult role in accommodating MID students.

Teachers believed that curriculum alternatives such as the Launceston Student Workshop were valuable to balance the limitations inherent in mixed ability classes where teachers' attentions were, of necessity, thinly spread between several levels of understanding and engagement. MID students enrolled in alternative programs were considered by their teachers "privileged" in comparison to students with similar non-academic needs who, for reasons of poor confidence, lack of family encouragement, or distance, were unable to participate in alternative or off-site options. The results of the study show curriculum differentiation to be a process valued by proximal stakeholders for the adjustment it can offer MID students' domain mix.

Appropriate *participation* is therefore not seen by respondents as being associated with any particular syllabus or level, whether of the main (non-elective) curriculum or alternatives to it. On the contrary, it can be inferred from the domain emphasis data that some subjects most identified with the non-academic curriculum domains could in themselves provide sufficient academic skills to satisfy MID students' requirements. This reversal of the could be argued as a practical and theoretical alternative to

'remediation' and curriculum 'adaptation' which treat the academic core of the curriculum as the focal basis.

Outcomes

By focussing on *content* and *outcomes* as the operational variables of curriculum, the study has sought to describe the relationship of course content and program designs to expressed outcomes for students.

Transition plans for full and productive citizenship (Halpern, 1989; Parmenter 1990; 1994), combined with the Finn (1991) and Mayer (1992) initiatives for all students have placed *outcomes* as the most critical variable of curriculum. The generally early exit of MID students from formal education, though not desirable in many cases, must nevertheless be understood in its *outcomes* implications. The experiences of those target students in the study who left school at or before the end of Grade 10 are mixed. The common experience, however, was that outcomes-orientations of the students' school programs were not able to be articulated by the students, their teachers or their parents. Assessment practices for the students' were not understood by families and bore little relationship to adjustments that the students were to make as school leavers.

The end of compulsory schooling is not the end of 'education' for MID student, in the broad sense. Nevertheless, it has been shown to be the MID students' most common disembarkation point from formal education. There is every reason to consider assessment of their curriculum outcomes as critical at this point. This study has shown that curriculum content and outcomes intended by the TCE structure and its summary certificate are not considered by stakeholders as important for MID students' adult and working life.

The Schools Board of Tasmania has recently initiated a review of TCE syllabuses. Its Chief Executive Officer has detailed that the review should "retain the system which requires all syllabuses to be underpinned by a common set of competencies" (Fish, 1995, p. 2) and continue with criterion-based assessment. The Board's initiative addresses questions of equity, asking:

* Are there appropriate pathways for all students?
* Is there a need for documentation of exemplar assessment techniques to support syllabuses? ...[and]
* Do the syllabuses take account of gender equity policies and practices, and sociocultural back-ground?

* More specifically, do the content, learning objectives and criteria reflect the range and diversity of the student population in terms of ability, sociocultural background and gender? [and]
* What changes need to be made to incorporate these equity issues?

(Fish, 1995, p. 2)

"Choice and Diversity" (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1985) characterised much systemic thinking ten years ago. In the search for equity in schooling, processes of choice and diversity are now in potential conflict with, on one hand, a national movement to define the eight agreed learning areas, and on the other, the common accountability demands of generic curriculum objectives.

The study has shown that the most significant accomplishments of MID students will be in the domains of social skills, life skills and pre-vocational skills. It is the lack of these skills which are shown to most impede MID students' progress towards employment, friendship and independent community living. Yet they are considered by stakeholders as largely absent from the focus (and hence, assessment) of MID students' curriculum outcomes. Tasmania's educational community has been aware for some considerable time of the important role informal assessments can have in improving some students' curriculum outcomes:

> ... students will exhibit a wide range of attainments that cannot be recorded in a brief school report or in a summary certificate of the kind that the school Board provides. Often, these attainments are of critical importance to students, and affect employment opportunities and the course of adult life generally ... Each student should take from school a record of achievement that supplements the Schools Board Certificate and gives a picture of a young person with particular talents and skills who can act responsibly and independently. (Education Department, Tasmania, 1987, p. 23)

Stakeholders' perceptions of curriculum *outcomes* are shown in the study to be less negotiable or open to deliberation than curriculum *content.* All given *outcomes,* save the summary record of the *TCE certificate* were attributed high priority by stakeholder groups, whereas the *content* items received generally lower ratings and had considerably wider ranges than did *outcomes* items.

While the project specifically targeted content-related curriculum outcomes, many significant statements were made in the interviews which were commentaries upon the hidden curriculums of the students' schools. The interview statements of students, parents and teachers show there are school, personal and family perspectives that are limiting MID individuals' *access, participation and outcomes.* The following attitudes

are implicit in the views of some proximal stakeholders. MID students were inclined to:

- get on with whatever is served up:

  You only learn what they say you gotta do. (Peter);
  So that they don't have to give me more work (Angelo);

- simply wait until school is over and done with:

  They've had enough of me and school. (Paul);
  I'm wasting my time doing stuff I can't do. (Peter);

- express their anger and frustration wherever and whenever they lose a sense of purpose or belonging:

  They soon lose the pace and lose heart with the load. (Teacher);
  They have to act up before they get any attention, and by the time they get it they're already running with the wolves. (Teacher);
  You just muck up and don't know what's going on. (Angelo);

- remain confused by the pressures of friendship:

  The main thing is to hang around with myself. (Angelo);
  [Keith] never went out of his way to make friends. (Parent);
  The MID kids from [Special School] have good self-esteem but poor Social Skills, and the ones from here [Regular High School] have poorer self-esteem and better Social Skills. (Teacher);

- resign to dependence upon ageing parents:

  Schools caused Paul to lose what security he had...no hope of getting himself in and out of town by himself. (Parent);

- accept that employment is an improbability:

  [Open employment] doesn't matter so long as she can get along. (Megan's parents);
  He can work at home; there's no easy life waiting for him. (Angelo's parent)

- assume that continuing education is for the academically successful:

  His education has come to an end. (Paul's parents);
  I learn more when I'm out of schools (Peter);

- are not led to understand, accommodate or transcend what disables them:

  I needed to learn about getting on with people and making friends. (Angelo);
  [The high school was] too inclined to worry about Keith's IQ than to look at his real abilities. (Parent).

The results of the study show that an appropriate curriculum requires that schools negotiate with MID students and other potentially disadvantaged students to make the stumbling blocks of hidden curriculum explicit as much as is possible (i.e., anticipated). This would help the total curriculum to pursue adaptive and functional outcomes which, in the perceptions of most stakeholders interviewed, are largely untargeted, only taught incidentally, and essentially unassessed. Without a sufficient matching of

planned content to valued, relevant outcomes, MID students will continue to be handicapped by the curriculum.

A template of an appropriate curriculum for MID adolescents.

To frame the implications more towards an 'applied' direction for schools, it will help if an example is given of how an appropriate curriculum might look for individual MID adolescents in a regular secondary setting. Figure 5. 1 on the following page shows a weekly timetable for one term. It has been constructed according to the curriculum domain adjustments suggested by the results.

The hypothetical 'exemplar timetable' comprises curriculum elements that range in importance from "coulds" to "shoulds" and "musts" (Brennan, 1985, p.81). Clark (1988) defined curriculum as "the *process* of making the full range of decisions about what and how children should learn and the results of these decisions" (p.178, emphasis in original). The process of curriculum deliberation requires a responsiveness to contextual conditions of schools and their partnering communities. Hence, while the given example is framed upon the curriculum structure of a local Grade 7-10 high school, and includes codes from commonly available syllabus options, the example is open to wide interpretation at school level. There are different course lengths from 25 hour A courses to 100 hour B courses. Naturally, the short A courses would depend on many school variables, not the least including timetabling logistics and staffing.

Only a sampling of alternative programs has been represented in the timetable example. Though such programs operate largely outside the common structure and assessment frame of the TCE, they were nevertheless valued highly by stakeholders as curriculum option for MID adolescents. Further, while being reasonably free of gender specificity, there could be considerably more variation given according to gender. Similar differentiations are possible in respect of rural/urban and learning opportunities characteristic to those contexts.

Many specific-to-community programs can be substituted for the community access and workplace experience programs. In some situations (including Launceston and its surrounds) short term off-site programs offer conflict resolution skills and personal relationship skills for secondary students with behaviours of serious concern. MID adolescents are often involved in such programs at rates which appear greater than might be expected from 'projected population figures.

The following 'template' is intended to reflect the balance implied in stakeholders' perceptions regarding curriculum options desired from a regular secondary school base.

Figure 5.1 Example of an appropriate curriculum for a Grade 9 student with Mild Intellectual Disabilities, as it may appear in a regular high school timetable, with unit codes of suitable TCE syllabuses.

PERIOD	*MON*	*TUES*	*WED*	*THURS*	*FRI*
8:45 to 8:55	H O M E R O O M				
1	Phys. Ed./Health (e.g., PE214B)	Mathematics (e.g., MT119B)	Design in Wood (MD222B)	Basic Catering Enterprise (HM321B)	Skills & Strategies for Learning
2	Health & Lifestyle (HL072A)	Mathematics	Design in Wood	Basic Catering Enterprise	Design in Wood
3	English, (e.g., EN115B)	Basic Catering Enterprise (HM321B)	Maintenance around Home (MD062A)	Skills & Strategies for Learning	*Science (SC122B)
4	English	Basic Catering Enterprise	❖Community Access (SS320B)	Mathematics	Phys. Ed./Health (PE214B)
Lunch		+30 mins Tutoring		★ Workplace Experience (WS007)	30 mins Tutoring
5	*Science (e.g. SC122B)	Phys. Ed./Health (PE214B)			Maintenance around Home (MD062A)
6	Skills &Strategies for Learning (WS201B)	Health & Lifestyle (HL072A)			Maintenance around Home

* Science Term 1 ; Studies of Society Term 2; Agriculture Term 3.
★ Including *Tutor-Support Scheme* (Community-based work/mentoring)
+ Teacher or Teacher Assistant time on e.g., *Paired Reading*, maths facts automaticity, metric measurement conversions.
❖ Including public transport, public library membership.

Implications for curriculum practice

The designers of curriculum for MID students range from administrators at central offices to school-level personnel, including senior staff, teachers and, in the case of individual education plans, certain support personnel. While Robinson (1995) has claimed that curriculum development and reform must occur at a systemic or organisational level before genuinely equitable change can arrive, Skilbeck (1980) believed that all levels of curriculum planning must be in concert before any change in curriculum would be sustainable. The recommendations made for curriculum designers should be interpreted as inclusive of all levels of the planning ecosystem. As teachers daily reconceptualise and interpret the curriculum for individual needs, their curriculum design initiatives at school-based and District levels is recognised by including implications for both curriculum designers and classroom teachers.

As some might argue that there is no such thing as a teacher-proof curriculum, the recommendations made towards improving the appropriateness of the curriculum for MID adolescents fall largely to the professional responsiveness of teachers and educational administrators. Adolescents' development of work-related competencies and citizenship capabilities depends, for example, on teachers' abilities to synthesise educational and community views. Teachers are at the fulcrum of top-down and grass-roots responses towards appropriate curriculum design and implementation.

Implications from the study for Curriculum Designers and Classroom Teachers

In light of the questions addressed by the study, the following 'suggestions' are offered to educators to help inform curricular decisions and deliberations involving MID students .

1. Differentiated curriculum which emphasises functional and social adaptive elements should be explored as an option valued by stakeholders for meeting the ecological transitional needs of MID students and others 'at-risk' of school failure. Educators should acknowledge that equity of educational outcomes is not, in the view of proximal stakeholders, equated with a single, homogenous curriculum. Schools are perceived by stakeholders as compromised in their ability to offer individualised content and outcomes while attending to the more general curriculum needs of the majority. Schools must re-assess their capacity to fulfil the greater needs of MID students and what place individualisation and differentiation of curriculum (both

content and context) might have in affording MID students and other disadvantaged groups "opportunity rights" (Bayles, 1985, p.2) in post school life.

2. Stakeholders placed great importance upon the fundamental need of MID students to have curriculum content approached through appropriate processes. These included:

(a) concrete and experiential learning with demonstration , practice and feedback ;

(b) contextualised learning referenced to community activity and contexts; and

(c) cross-contextual, collaborative planning, delivery and assessment to maximise transfer of learning and outcomes from an overall curriculum.

These processes demand that teachers and school leaders have an expanded notion of curriculum which spans both school and community learning contexts. Consequently teachers must be able to partner off-campus personnel in delivering and appraising the growth of enabling functional, social adaptive and work-referenced skills.

2. Curriculum design, prioritising and selection should occur in consultation with the relevant stakeholders groups. The greatest influence is seen by the study's respondents as coming ideally from those most proximal to the student. Teachers, administrators and community workers should bear in mind that professional expertise is not justified on social ecological grounds as a substitute for giving students and families the major influence in decisions about curriculum content, processes and purposes. This is not simply an ethical conclusion. The results suggest that effective teaching and learning will depend on accurate needs analysis and that this is not likely to occur outside collaborative, ecological assessment.

3. Early development of student self-awareness and choice-making should move teachers from acting *in the students' interest* to *acting upon the students' (informed) interests*. Towards this end, students' experiential knowledge of real-life options is indicated as necessary for their effective participation in curriculum negotiation, including assessment and evaluation. Families, as key influences in MID students' attitudes and choices, must also be given every opportunity to become aware of the direct relationships of content and processes to curriculum outcomes. This is not a passing-out activity for families of school leavers. Parents and teachers of the targeted MID students confirmed the views of Green (1991) and Richardson (1993b) that realistic choice making begins with the *early* awareness and collaboration of all parties.

4. The mix of academic and non-academic content available to MID students must be adjusted. In the researched context, although Life Skills were greatly needed for MID students, these were considered to already be receiving close to optimal attention in curriculum terms. Social Skills, however, were under-emphasised in the structure and the delivery of the regular curriculum, as were Pre-vocational learning experiences. To achieve an appropriate balance of curriculum domains for MID students, schools might :

(a) devote more of MID students' timetables to syllabuses and programs whose content and outcomes focus on the non-academic domains ; or

(b) devote greater attention to the non-academic skill domains in the delivery of syllabuses associated with core or non-elective subjects such as Science or English.

The first of these strategies would best suit the social need most commonly expressed for the target MID students. This was for friendship initiation and friendship maintenance skills. 'Angelo's' statement, *"My main thing is to hang around with myself"* is aphoristic of the loneliness felt by MID students in regular school contexts. MID students' curriculums must respond to this and other adaptive needs (e.g., impulse control) with negotiated, planned and assessed content and outcomes.

5. The number of "subjects" can be reduced effectively for MID students, with students "doubling-up" on negotiated courses/units. The cross-curricular approach will maximise focussed time on generic skills. Key common learning needs at stage-appropriate intervals should be revisited via spiral curriculum planning. To concentrate and generalise the effects of MID student's curriculums, schools might borrow a process slogan from the realm of environmental resources: *reduce, re-use and recycle.*

6. Skill domains most rewarded by the education system and reflected in their certification systems are not necessarily those regarded most highly by the community, including employers. Few MID students will rely upon formal qualifications in their job-seeking or community-role choices. Records of Achievement, in the form of personal folios, should be continued and enhanced to reflect MID students' most valued accomplishments. From the results of the study, these can be predicted to lie outside the Academic Skills domain..

7. The stumbling blocks of transition from primary school to secondary school and from school to community/workplace should be anticipated by teachers and other stakeholders with a collaborative effort *resourced* by both source and reception sites.

The delayed development in cognitive and social domains characteristic of MID students would indicate the need for a process that would see them through early adolescence into at least middle adolescence still supported by the familiar relationships, integrated curriculum and concrete learning supports more typical of primary schooling. The model of Middle Schooling would appear to conform to the needs of MID students targeted in this study. On the evidence of the stakeholders' opinions, initiatives in Grade 7-10 secondary schools to reduce the range of staff responsible for delivering the curriculum, and to develop more continuous learning spaces for students should enhance the appropriate participation of MID young adolescents in regular schools.

8. Student enterprise programs, work simulation, work experience, and vocational placement programs must be available earlier and for a greater proportion of MID students' schooling. Although Employers were shown to support the placement of intellectually disabled students for experience in their workplaces, this support diminished in proportion to the prospective students' ages. Schools might therefore anticipate some difficulty placing younger students in workplaces for significant periods of time and, where placement opportunities prove to be limited, compensate by offering practical pre-vocational experiences on campus.

Implications for Teacher Education and Teacher Professional Development

Developing teachers' competence in the ecological design and management of curricular alternatives is a 'pivotal' requirement. While teachers may be able to translate the recommendations of this study into school-level practice, the mechanisms of teacher professional development and tertiary education (at undergraduate and graduate levels) are responsible for most formal shaping and informing of teachers' practice. Implications are therefore drawn for those arms of education. The results suggest that:

1. Preservice teacher preparation must generate an awareness of strategies for referencing curriculum directly to the community contexts within which the learning is to be applied by the MID student. At an inservice level, teachers' *awareness might be expected to extend to skills* of contextualised design and delivery of curriculum. From this process, a working understanding of the advantages of contextuality (Wiltshire 1994) in learning for students can be gained. In particular, teacher educators need to be more varied in conceiving the 'Practicum' and to seek out placements that will bring broader experiences before students and expand their notions of curriculum.

2. Preservice and in-service teacher education should include active awareness of disabilities, of the learning needs of students with disabilities and of a range of skills in intervention. Teaching roles which include the negotiating of community involvement in curriculum alternatives and extra-curricular support should be given a significant focus.

3. Teacher educators and others involved in professional development can help maximise the acquisition of such skills in lectures, tutorials and workshops by:

- modelling a range of teaching strategies;
- modelling the advantages of cross-discipline processes such as teaching technologies and cross-curricular assessment; *and*
- including consideration of students with disabilities in their general discussions of the whole student population as a matter of course.

Implications for Parents and Advocates

1. Families will be in a better position to guide the purpose of the TCE (and its formal summary certification of school achievement) for their children if they are conversant with the operating principles of their students' curriculum structure, in the case of this research context, the TCE and its complementary alternatives. Parents and any personnel involved in the transition of students from one stage or sector to another must have sufficient understanding of both course options and assessment methods in order to maximise the usefulness of any records.

2. The design of MID students' programs must be informed by parents or guardian/advocates as a precondition to relevant transitional planning. When parents are contributors from the outset, the content of the curriculum has a relevance check established: the development of the student is matched to the developing awareness of the child's family and support networks.

3. Parents and advocates should not take for granted Employers' knowledge of the students' achievements on the basis of Schools Board's summary TCE certificates. The use of folios such as Records of Achievement should be supported as it is generally favoured by parents and other stakeholders over the reporting value of TCE certificates. Parents should be progressively aware of the contents and intended outcomes of the Schools Board certificate.

4. Alternatives to classroom-based learning require the support of the community if they are to remain viable. Parents and advocates of MID students' needs will recognise in the results of this research that the highest priorities of MID students will be high also to many of their regular peers. Programs to directly address MID students' priorities should be promoted as very pertinent to many students. While MID students alone will not be numerous enough to command significant shifts in staffing and timetable allocations for life-skills and social skills domains, parents and advocates can argue the study's finding that employers consider social and life skills aspects of the curriculum more important than academic learning. Administrators will recognise the generic demand for such outcomes and that the staffing of appropriate courses is both plausible and necessary.

5. Where the advocate happens to be a community agent with a role of bridging home, school and community for persons with disabilities, the notion of *earlier-than-normal* access to community facilities should become a priority. Coupled with extended and repeated opportunities to master community accessing procedures such as public transport and library membership, the readiness to work after school and even during school hours on building community access skills will work to compensate for MID students' characteristic slowness and overcome the limitations of delayed independence, which potentially disadvantage students as they experience the world of work.

Implications for Employers

1. Employers are shown in the data to recognise the pre-vocational needs of early school-leaving students. This has been evident recently in projects such as that of the *Beacon Foundation*. This initiative has seen businesses pledge to retain a certain percentage of their work entry placements for students leaving school at Grade 10. Employers should be moved by this study's results to see a social responsibility to students with intellectual disabilities. Such students are statistically more likely than their regular peers to become unemployed after leaving school and have social and educational disadvantages beyond those of many other 'at-risk' students. Employers should recognise the contribution workplace familiarity can make to providing relevance in MID students' overall curriculum. The study suggests workplaces can provide transfer of learning opportunities (from the more abstract school-based curriculum).

2. The greatest obstacles to employment for MID students lie in their lack of social skills. The results of this project are corroborated by the recently released Tasmanian DEA's (1994b) *Entry Level Training Feasibility Study for Students with*

Intellectual Disability. Nevertheless, given early (i.e., 14 years old) exposure to workplace experiences such as the Launceston Student Workshop and the Tutor Support Scheme, MID trainees have the demonstrated ability to fulfil many working roles. Where employers do give MID students opportunities for working experience, this study must conclude from the data that the major collaborative planning focus should lie in the Social Skills domain.

Criteria for appropriate curriculum

In the *Introduction* it was proposed that the study might offer a set of criteria by which educators may both evaluate curriculum for its appropriateness to MID students and proceed to design more appropriate curricular pathways for those students. On the basis of the implications of the project's results, it is possible to frame such a set. The criteria proposed can also be seen as further indications for research, particularly toward curriculum theory. Implicit in the criteria is that a curriculum which fails to account for any of the criteria would not meet the anticipated curriculum needs of adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities as evinced by this research project.

Although the proposed attributes of an appropriate curriculum relate in particular to MID students' needs, they also have direct relevance to the broader student population. From a review of the literature, the study acknowledged the equity-based principle that both the individual and the community-referenced needs of students must be reflected in any curriculum. The criteria cover Thomson's (1987) needs types of: *normative* (deemed for all); *instrumental* (interpreted according to specific ends); and *fundamental* (non-negotiable, personal and basic). The criteria express these needs in conceptual and generic terms.

It is both implicit and explicit in the data that the secondary curriculum prevalent for MID adolescents is not appropriate to either their personal or deemed priorities, nor to the learning styles identified in the literature as characteristic of MID students. The regular curriculum provided for them does not utilise sufficiently the processes recommended by stakeholders as valued or needed for MID adolescents. These must be accounted for in any curriculum claiming to be appropriate. While educational outcomes can't be mandated, curriculum providers can be constrained to apply appropriate processes and content so that the chances of students failing to achieve equitable or enabling outcomes will be minimised.

To be appropriate, curriculum should be:

1. ***Ecological,*** *reflecting the links between family, school, community and workplace, acknowledging adjustment demands upon students as they move between those contexts.*

2. ***Empowering*** *in so far as it represents an increase in negotiation, choice and decision making activity for the most proximal stakeholders (students and parents).*

3. ***Enabling,*** *in that the learning must address the adaptive skills (social and life skills) which are the most prominent constraints to full ecological participation.*

4. ***Collaborative****, among school and non-school personnel operating in curriculum planning, implementation and assessment of performance across settings, contexts or curriculum areas.*

5. ***Contextualised*** *to maximise learning in real community and workplace environments, acknowledging that transition to adulthood and independence is not only a post-school phenomenon but a lifelong process.*

6. ***Balanced*** *in its curriculum domain responses, in order that domain engagement reflects domain priorities.*

7. ***Accessible,*** *for long enough, often enough and in a sufficiently concrete form, for effective learning to occur.*

8. ***Articulated*** *to other learning for optimal generalisation and transfer, especially between school and non-school contexts,* and

9. ***Accredited*** *in so far as the learning priorities most valued for students and most central to heir curriculums are able to be represented to others, either for personal or public purposes.*

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn inferences from the study's results for the theory surrounding curriculum for students with special needs and for practice at all levels. The project had intended from the beginning to have direct applicability to school and classroom level, given that the genesis of study came through the real school experiences of youths with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. The implications serve as recommendations for action on the parts of several stakeholder groups. The priorities expressed in MID students' needs for *content*, *process* and *outcomes* are acknowledged as context-specific to the students at the centre of the study. No one curriculum can serve the educational priorities of all students. However, in its conceptualising of an appropriate curriculum, the study has presented a rationale for possible differentiations of time, context, content and assessment, among others. These conceptual directions, summarised as criteria for the design and delivery of appropriate curriculum, are argued to have relevance for MID adolescents across Australia and beyond.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

A proper school makes the world a child's home.
Brandwein (1977)

Introduction

The study had two main objectives around which the research questions were framed. The first was to describe the curriculum needs of young MID adolescents within an ecological perspective. This was constrained by the logistics of single-handed data collection and the particularities of the research context. The second objective was to describe the characteristics of an appropriate curriculum for meeting those needs. The *Conclusion* first reviews the research problem and the study's objectives . In doing so it considers curriculum as a dimension of 'needs'. Following cautions regarding the limitations of the results, the thesis concludes with recommendations for further research.

Curriculum as a dimension of 'needs'

The *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling* (MCEETYA, 1994) is clear in its expectation that students should

> achieve curriculum outcomes that have intrinsic value and significance to the students and their communities and that are valued by the wider society in terms of pathways to future employment and further education and training. (p. 8)

The successful inclusion of MID students in regular school settings is critical to the Tasmanian *Equity in Schooling* policy (DEA, Tasmania, 1995). MID students constitute the majority of the cohort targeted by the policy on *Inclusion* (DEA, Tasmania, 1994a) which was developed in advance of the broader equity position. The curriculum for those included students, whether provided generally to the student population or differentiated for certain groups, must take account of their characteristic and specific learning needs.

In retrospect, the study approached MID students' needs in terms of, first, what was *wanted*, and then, what was *wanting* in their curriculums. The secondary schools in this study were shown to provide inadequately for the Social Skills and Pre-vocational Skills of MID students included in their student body. At best, schools were uninformed about the curriculum content and outcomes most important to MID students. At worst, the schools were aware of those needs but failed to set in train the processes which would address them directly.

Fulcher (1990) relates Cooper's (1982) notion that "professionals, rather than people themselves, define needs, and what is already institutionally available tends to limit the responses about need" (p.352). By gaining the perceptions of each of several stakeholder groups, such a dominance of professional (or distal) opinion has been minimised in the study. The study has, in its ecological approach to the problem, provided touchstones of common ground which nevertheless, do not deny or devalue the differences which exist among the individual students at the focus of the study and among the stakeholder groups identified as respondents.

Curriculum design must account both for the school needs of MID students and the community adjustment demands upon the students. It must recognise that students should be able to move between increasingly wider spheres of their ecosystems. To limit the curriculum to immediate survival level skills would be no more justified than to promote only the most esoteric of academic skills. The study has developed an description of appropriate curriculum that is not domain-specific. Rather, the study has sought a domain *balance* that is more attuned to an inclusive context and more plausible in a barrier-free community. The curriculum processes most valued by stakeholders apply across the four domains and link the content with express outcomes.

Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

Each of the students at the centre of the study were shown to have curriculum needs, particularly in terms of outcomes, in common with their broad peer group. There is some of this in the rationale behind choices made for them of a regular educational setting from which their curriculum is mostly provided. The study's qualitative analysis of the students' learning needs show that students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities, whether more or less proficient in social adaptive skills, have curriculum needs which differ markedly from those of the majority of students. The success of alternative programs which emphasise experiential learning, contextualised curriculum, and community links attest that, while the students' strength areas are vital factors, the slower and more concrete learning styles characteristic of their disabilities cannot be

ignored in the processes and content elements of their curriculums. In the light of this study's results, the argument that MID students' needs are "not very different in kind from those of other children" (DEA, Tasmania, 1995, p. 41) should be qualified by saying that MID students' needs are *sufficiently different* to require more alternatives to the regular curriculum than are presently offered.

Limitations of the results

The results of the study must be viewed within the limitations of the research methodology. As explained in the *Methodology* chapter, the claims of the study have rested largely in the ecological design of its data gathering approaches. The ecological nature of this design featured:

a) triangulation of data through the application of several techniques;

b) use of multiple respondent samples, across several stakeholder groups as a check for consensus or social validity (Sanger, 1995);

c) a longitudinal data-gathering framework to reflect change over time in students' curricula and therefore generate a more valid image of key stakeholders' views; *and*

d) purposive subject selection to maximise the relatability of the focal subject's school experiences to those of many other MID adolescents undertaking regular secondary curriculums.

The study's quantitative data were gathered using two questionnaires designed for the particular context. It should be noted that the Questionnaire to Stakeholders (Appendix I) used a five-point scale to seek respondents' ratings of various content and outcomes in MID students' curriculums. Ratings below the middle score were discounted, leaving only the two highest ratings to affect the relative importance attributed by respondents to each element. In this sense, the middle rating of "desirable" on the five-point scale was seen as indicative of ambivalence, rather than of strong support.

Generalisation to populations

Although the sample size of 72 respondents to the Questionnaire to Stakeholders was adequate to inform the project regarding curricular *coulds, shoulds and musts* for students at the centre of the study, generalisations beyond the context of the study must be made with caution. The implications drawn from the results are primarily for Tasmanian circumstances, and in particular the social and educational ecology in

which the target students operate. Six students comprised the target group of MID adolescents. They are not numerically 'representative' of the estimated 1500 Tasmanian MID students (DEA, Tas., 1994b) . The choice of particular subjects has relied upon the field experience of the researcher with MID students (seven years at the inception of the study) in selecting the six students for their 'typicality' to the broad MID student cohort.

Generalisation to settings

The results and implications of the study are framed for MID students included in regular settings. The data concerning curriculum domain emphases are related to the syllabuses typically offered for MID students in regular secondary schools. Conclusions in respect of Special Schools' curriculums should therefore not be inferred from the results.

Recommendations for further research

Several questions for practice and theory have emerged from the study. While they could not be pursued within the necessarily limited scope of the project, research into the questions would advance the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum for disabled students. Six directions are indicated.

1. Teacher skills in developing students' Social Skills

The project has clearly highlighted Social Skills and Life Skills as a key curriculum outcomes for MID students. Social Skills appear to be the domain that stakeholders most require of teachers to plan overtly and generate. Research is necessary to ascertain how to raise the proportion of Social Skills domain learning across every curriculum area. This is primarily a teaching and learning problem. Research is necessary to describe or develop effective curriculum and teaching methods at undergraduate and professional development levels of teacher education which will give teachers and teachers the skills necessary to heighten the Social Skills developed by students from *any* syllabus or program across the curriculum.

2. Self-knowledge and choice-making of MID persons

The study has raised the issue of realistic choices on the parts of MID students. The two variables of realism and choice behaviour, while connected in common notions of decision making or problem solving, are not well understood in relation to intellectual disability. The question of children's awareness of their own disabilities is ethically challenging, but it is the belief of this researcher that such a study would ultimately

help intellectually disabled students (and their guardians, advocates or teachers) to increase students' ownership of choice making. In able persons, there is a body of research into the use of metacognition to overcome learning or performance obstacles. The measuring of students' ownership of their learning with such instruments as Knight's (1992) *Locus of Control* instrument may improve educational psychologists' knowledge base regarding the parameters of self-awareness in intellectually disabled persons. The present study attempted to use Knight's test but due to subject withdrawals and insufficient subject numbers to provide a critical mass for statistical significance. Nevertheless, the instrument itself appeared promising.

3. The transfer of social skills

It is prudent to presume that the difficulties students experience in transferring functional academic learning from one context to another will be present in the case of social skills. School level research is needed to explore and explain effective cross-contextual models of teaching and assessment for learning transfer of social skills essential to school-to-work and community transition. The roles of school and non-school staff vis-a-vis information sharing in assessment and planning are critical to the development of school/industry links and community-referenced learning programs of schools.

4. The transition from primary to secondary school

This study has confirmed the particular difficulty found by MID students in the transition to high school. The relative advantage of middle schooling for MID students should be explored across multiple contexts. Models for generating similar pastoral support and curriculum cohesion for students in regular high schools should be explored within the same aegis. The needs raised, prioritised and explored in the present study could help in establishing intended outcomes against which to compare the advantages of several models.

5. Work experience

The study has acknowledged the contribution that can be made to the motivation of students by referencing at least the non-academic aspects of the curriculum to the students' community context and the students' developing community role. What is not clear is the optimal level of time that should be devoted to workplace placement. At present in Tasmania there is a considerable disparity between the Grade 10 Work Experience program standard of 5 days maximum on site and the Grade 11/12 Work Placement syllabus which allows up to 240 hours of on-site workplace training (with possible negotiations for time "in excess" of this figure (DEA, Tasmania, 1994c). Research of a multi-site, quasi-experimental type should be conducted to determine the

most effective time engagement in workplaces for adolescents with and without disabilities. On the basis of such a study's findings, it may be possible to undertake with co-operating employers arrangements which would see priority going to those groups who are shown to benefit most from greater engagement.

6. Authentic Assessment

A final research direction is indicated at a systems level. The project has brought to light a significant discounting among stakeholders of the current value to MID students of the TCE structure and its related Schools Board summary assessment certificate. It is recommended that research should investigate:

(a) measures both to enhance the relevance of the TCE structure and certificate for MID students (among other at-risk students);

(b) the nature of desirable alternative reporting procedures and formats; *and*

(c) improving the community's awareness of the TCE and alternative programs as they relate to school-to-community transition.

Conclusion

In education, the relationship of personal outcomes to social outcomes is one which gives the curriculum its purpose and its direction. The curriculum is a journey of many well-beaten courses of the 'common good', but also of a myriad entries and divergences which reflect the interests and needs of the individual traveller. The curriculum is also a vehicle. In the Hindu tradition of the Vedas, the *Mahayana* is the way of the big boat, while the *Hinayana* is the way of the small boat. What we take on board in our education is not only a matter of opportunity, but equally of selection.

Brennan's (1985) concept that time makes curriculum necessary through selection has been examined in the study through four contending skill domains. They are argued to encompass the content and outcomes which comprise curriculum in its most explicit form. The study began with a description of MID students' curriculum needs, and progressed to consider the relative claims of each skill domain in MID students' curriculums, commensurate with the importance attributed to each domain's elements by stakeholders, including MID students themselves.

The curriculum *needs* described through the study are argued to be pervasive, affecting the success of curriculum for MID students throughout Tasmania and Australia at large. The study has shown that, at least in the researched context, curriculum design and provision has considerable ground to cover before MID adolescents' greatest curriculum

needs can be met. The study has drawn conclusions for theory, implications in practice for several stakeholder groups, recommendations for further research, and has proposed criteria for appropriate curriculum to inform both action and research. These outcomes of the research pathway are offered as "A Way to Go" in meeting the curriculum needs of adolescents with Mild Intellectual Disabilities.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire to Stakeholder Groups.

A WAY TO GO

a study about

CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Dear Reader,

This survey is part of a study which hopes to shed light on the learning program needs of Mildly Intellectually Disabled (MID) students. I am a learning support teacher researching through the University of Tasmania. The questionnaire is intended to help determine what points of agreement there are among "stakeholders'" perceptions regarding educational programs and outcomes of MID students.

The term *"Stakeholder"* has been used for those people or groups who have an interest in the student's learning life and outcomes. Some will be directly involved with such students while others will have only a distant connection with schools. (Given that roughly a third of our taxes are allocated to Commonwealth and State education budgets, I've included the "taxpayer" as a stakeholder so that some idea can be gained about the opinion of the "community at large." or the "man in the street.")

Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID) are generally enrolled in regular schools while some attend special schools. Though definitions may vary, I.Q. 50-70 has, to psychologists, signified a Mild Intellectual Disability. However, the use of IQ figures is not the preferred way of referring to students' abilities. Instead, the term "Significantly below average" is used in by psychologists to indicate that such a student is NOT simply a remedial student who might be expected to "catch up" given extra attention. Nor are MID students' problems specific to language. MID students are slower learners, delayed in both the language *and* mathematical areas. Some physical conditions including epilepsy may be present as well.

Six representative "thumbnail portraits" have been given, based on real children (pseudonyms used) and drawn from interviews with parents, schools and guidance officers. They are included so that when you answer the questionnaire, your responses will be more informed and meaningful. It is suggested that you read each "portrait" just before you answer the columns about *that* child, so that the child is "fresh in your mind."

THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS. TO MAKE IT AS EASY AS POSSIBLE, QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ORGANISED SO THAT THEY CAN BE ANSWERED WITH A CIRCLE OR A NUMBER. PLEASE DON'T PUT IT ASIDE AND FORGET ABOUT IT. IT SHOULD ONLY NEED 20 OR SO MINUTES TO COMPLETE.

Rob Andrew

PLEASE RETURN BY AUGUST 15, IF POSSIBLE. REMEMBER TO USE THE REPLY PAID ENVELOPE INCLUDED. YOU DO NOT NEED A STAMP.

Rob Andrew, UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA at LAUNCESTON, c/- Department of E.C.E. & Primary Studies, P.O. Box 1214, Launceston, 7250. Ph. 003 243280

TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE, IT MAY BE EASIEST TO READ EACH "THUMBNAIL PORTRAIT" AS YOU RESPOND, CHILD-BY-CHILD.

PAUL is thirteen, shy and gentle. He lives in a comfortable family with one younger brother who has begun to puzzle that PAUL "can't do things like me but he's two years older." PAUL'S developmental markers were well behind at 2 $^1/_2$, even though he walked early. He had occupational therapy and physio and at 5 began medication for epilepsy. He has up to 22 minor absences per day and some nocturnal seizures. PAUL presents well but operates at a nine-year old level of maturity. His memory is very poor. He had six unhappy years at primary school, making "no progress over six years." He was teased and staff did not understand his disability, thinking him unmotivated. PAUL suffered separation anxiety and wouln't go alone out of sight of his home's chimney. Now at high school, he wants to attend Launceston Student Workshop, a vocational training workplace. His parents were amazed when he went on camp this year for the first time in his life. PAUL reads at a grade three level but can't deal with money. He shows cats as a family enterprise. He enjoys woodwork and, though he kicks a football well with both feet, he is too shy to play in a team.

MEGAN is a tall twelve-year old girl who has spent her primary school years in regular school. MEGAN lives happily with Mum and Dad and is the second eldest of four children. She is presently in the senior section of a Special School, placed there for the extra attention she is able to get and for peers at her level of ability. At Primary School MEGAN had considerable individual help from aides, having long been involved in life-skills programs. While stubborn at times, she's described as a girl who can put in a big effort. High School is likely to be confusing and over her head; it scares her. Cooking has been MEGAN'S most successful activity. Though she has very basic skills in language and maths, her writing is quite neat. MEGAN'S parents set a priority on her gaining independence skills (such as balancing a budget) for when she's "out on her own." MEGAN talks enthusiastically about leaving home at 18.

ANGELO is thirteen, in Grade 7 at (Regular) High School. An only child, he has attended six primary schools and may yet attend another high school by year's end. His parents, who have initiated the moves, maintain he is quite "able" but Guidance Officers have assessed him as having serious verbal and logical problems, warranting an intervention plan. His mum considers him "just lazy." ANGELO writes reasonably well but very slowly, stringing sentences together with rambling, disconnected meaning. He is physically frail and a loner among peers. Though he can't keep up with ordinary school subject work, he has not, until recent months, been involved in Life Skills programs. His school has funded aide time for him (2 hrs/wk) and offers special help in its resource room for him. ANGELO favours T.V. and reading for leisure but has little time for it because of the housework he does at home. In addition to homework, his stepfather asks him to do "*extra* learning practice to help him catch up." ANGELO doesn't know what he wants to do after he leaves school.

TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE, IT MAY BE EASIEST TO READ EACH "THUMBNAIL PORTRAIT" AS YOU RESPOND, CHILD-BY-CHILD.

SALLY is nearly fifteen, and attended a special school for some of her primary years. Now successfully integrated into an across-town high school, she is the eldest of a large family and is good with babies and infants. SALLY has "street literacy," being able to follow a shopping list, signs, find and write her name and write her phone number. She can't read books or recipes (other than those trained.) She has money recognition skills but no change computation. SALLY'S real talent lies in woodwork where she has excelled her peers, both male and female, for some years. She can turn lathed shapes to a pattern and effect halving joints by her own methods. Apart from measuring skills, her ability with wood is, according to her teacher, "equal to a good level two student." SALLY wants to leave school at the end of the year because some of her older friends have gone on to work in a supported employment workshop in the city. Her mother wants her to stay home and help with the family.

PETER is just sixteen and has repeated one grade at primary school. He is living with his Mum but has moved back with his Dad on and off many times. Dad, who can't read, does backyard car-work, and Mum, who reads "O.K." does some cleaning. PETER attends a big High School and can't wait to finish. He made a transition there from a special school after primary age. At special school he learned to use a lathe well, do basic joinery and to play the recorder quite competently. High school has been hard. He is withdrawn from English, Maths and Social Science, to work with a Special Needs teacher in a group, but has managed reasonably well in manual arts and rural science. PETER is a reluctant learner who has no plans for post-compulsory education or employment. He was given a chance at Launceston Student Workshop but lost his temper when told what to do. He likes to blend among his peers and would rather not try than "look dumb." He has no functional literacy and can perform only the most basic number operations. However, while at his previous school, he was its most ardent and successful fund-raiser via raffle tickets.

KEITH is fifteen, living in a country town with his parents and one sister. He attends the local District High School, doing his language-based lessons with the "special needs" teacher and the other subjects like Rural Science with the subject teachers. KEITH was identified in kinder as having serious learning delays. His mother denied this at first, proving to his teacher's surprise that he *could* count at home and do some things that he was not showing at school. In the long run, however, his family acknowledged that he did have a disability and needed more time and special attention if he was to learn much at school. KEITH learns best by watching and copying. He is good with mechanical work and also agriculture. He wants to drive a truck when he's old enough and pesters his family to help him swat for an orally-tested driver's licence next year. Though he can't read much at all, he did learn to write down accurately the names of customers charging petrol at a service station over the holidays. KEITH may board in the city later this year to attend the Student Workshop where he could learn more workplace skills.

A WAY TO GO..... SURVEY OF STUDENT NEEDS

➡ Q. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THESE STUDENTS TO HAVE THESE THINGS IN THEIR LEARNING ?

The scale is :

0 = not important at all; 1= a small need; 2 = desirable; 3 = fairly important; 4 = of great importance

LESSONS FOR...	SALLY	PETER	KEITH
1) Life Skills (e.g.cooking for self or group., public transport,)	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
2) Basic reading and writing (Newspaper, sign name, recipes etc)	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
3) Manual skills such as building, sewing, basic maintenance)	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
4) Craft skills for hobby purposes.	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
5)Work/job-finding skills (ads,/interviews)	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
6) Health & physical development including sports for leisure	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
7) Social skills: making friends, leisure and group activities, good manners etc.)	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
8) T.C.E. subjects as in main curriculum	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
9) Driver training and car care	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
10) Special pre-work training like Launceston Student Workshop	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
11) Gardening skills for home growing	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
12) Farm work skills/ wood-getting fencing etc.	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4

A WAY TO GO ..... SURVEY OF STUDENT NEEDS

➡ Q. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR EACH OF THE STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE THESE THINGS ?

The scale is :

0 = not important at all; 1= a small need ; 2= desirable ; 3= fairly important; 4= of great importance

OUTCOMES	SALLY	PETER	KEITH
1) T. C. E. Certificates	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
2) Records of Achievement	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
3) Work or job skills	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
4) Independence of living and getting around	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
5) Self-care and health awareness	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
6) Social ability as in courtesy, assertiveness and sharing.	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
7)Happiness or contententment	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
8) Effective communication skills	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
9) Reading and writing skills to the child's potential	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
10) Fulfilment or sense of accomplishment	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4

(Identical format sheets on outcomes and lessons were provided for responses regarding "Sally, Peter, Keith, Paul, Megan and Angelo".)

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS :

1. Who *should* be the **most influential** of the *stakeholders* in the education of a Mildly Intellectually Disabled student? Rank from 1-8 (1 = most important, 8 = least important.)

☐ *student himself / herself*	☐ *taxpayer*
☐ *teacher/s at school*	☐ *education administrators*
☐ *potential employers*	☐ *community agencies / carers / trainers*
☐ *parent/s or guardians*	☐ *other*.....
	.....

2. In which one of the above categories would you place yourself? .....

3. How many *stakeholder* groups should be consulted in order to design appropriate curriculum or learning programs for MID students? (circle)

one *a few* *all*

4. Which stage of regular schooling is **most** likely to provide an appropriate learning program for MID children? (circle one)

Kinder *Prep/1/2* *3-6* *7/8*

9/10 *11/12* *T.A.F.E.*

5. Approx. how many hours of an MID student's High School week (of 25 in total) should be spent on developing the following? First read the skill descriptions on reverse. (circle to total 25)

Daily living skills..... 0 , 2 , 5 , 10 , 15 , 20, 25

Pre-vocational skills (workplace-type skills)..... 0 , 2 , 5 , 10 , 15 , 20, 25

6. How aware were you of such children before reading this questionnaire? (circle)

not at all *a bit* *adequately* *very*

7. Would you like access to the findings of this survey/study? Y / N

Respondents may contact Rob Andrew at Tas. Uni. on 003 24 3280 to organise a confidential/unidentified posting or collection of the survey/study results.

SURVEY: LEARNING NEEDS OF MILDLY INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED STUDENTS

CONSENT FORM

As part of a research study to find out ***what people think are the most important learning needs of mildly intellectually disabled students,*** I am seeking your permission to interview you, your child and his or her teachers. Around 40 mins will be needed. You may also wish to fill out a brief questionnaire about your child's needs and those of some other students. NOTE **NO REAL NAMES ARE TO BE USED.**

The purpose of the study is to provide information for teachers and trainers. It may mean that learning programs can be better designed to respond to community expectations and to the expressed needs of students and their families.

If you agree to having a tape recorder used, please indicate below.* Any taping will be erased once written up.
Any questions concerning the study can be directed to:
Mr.D.Hannan at the School of Education, University of Tasmania at Launceston, ph. 26 0201.

Robert Andrew

Research student

.....

I have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate, realising I may withdraw this consent at any time.

I consent to discuss the learning needs of my child,

.....with Mr Andrew.

I consent to my child partaking in an interview with Mr.Andrew on the subject of his/her learning program, *given that my child and his/her principal is in agreement.*

I also consent to my child's teacher being interviewed with regard to those learning needs.

I give my permission that the information be published as part of the study *but I understand no real names are to be used.*

signed.....(parent, guardian) *date* / /

.....(parent, guardian) *date* / /

.....(researcher) *date* / /

Tape? Yes☐ No☐

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire to Employers

Questionnaire to Employers

This questionnaire is part of a study being conducted through the University of Tasmania at Launceston to help design ***appropriate high school courses for students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (M.I.D.)***

Like all students, those with Mild Intellectual Disabilities are being prepared for employment, continued education, and leisure. Your views, as employers, are needed for a balanced picture of those preparation needs. **This should only take about 15 minutes of your time.** ***PLEASE USE THE ENCLOSED POSTAGE-PAID ENVELOPE TO REPLY.*** Other "stakeholders" such as parents and teachers are also being consulted.

The World Health Organisation (W.H.O.) defines Mild Intellectual Disability as when a person presents an intelligence quotient (I.Q.) of between 55 and 70. The proportion of our society estimated to be in the M.I.D. category is between 1% and 2%. So we might expect one such student in every third class in our schools or one child in fifty families.

In order to give a more tangible picture of what the school-lives of M.I.D. students look like, some thumbnail portraits have been included for you to browse before answering the questionnaire. Here are some points to help you with the "jargon" used:

Life Skills are those abilities which give any person the capacity to live fairly independently, such as *to keep a house, personal hygeine, to manage money, to go shopping, catch a bus, use a phone and the capacity to engage in satisfying leisure pursuits. Life Skills literacy is the ability to tell such signs as safety and access facilities (toilets, post office etc.) and Life Skills numeracy generally involves such abilities as counting to twenty and using a calendar adequately.*

Pre-Vocational Skills are those abilities which will allow the employment of a person on a day-by-day basis, such as *punctuality, staying on-task, appropriate dress, accepting criticism, taking turns, keeping sequence, and signalling anomolies or problems.*

Academic Skills represent *the knowledge and abilities which stem from the basics or three R's. They are the building blocks of areas such as science or languages or technology. They include reading for information and cultural stimulus, writing in different styles, calculating beyond the daily numerical tasks and describing spatial relationships. They also relate to use of technology for communicating and computing such as keyboard and calculator.* These skills are usually dealt with in high schools via "core curriculum" subjects.

Social Skills are usually those which *denote quality of relationships and social interactions: assertiveness, friendship building and maintenance, appropriate communication and responses, impulse control (over temper or excitement), absence of offensive habits, acceptable expressions of sexuality.*

ALL RESPONSES ARE ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL, "FOLLOW-UPS" ARE NOT INTENDED. HOWEVER, IF YOU WOULD LIKE FEEDBACK ON THE SURVEY RESULTS, YOU COULD INCLUDE YOUR ADDRESS WHEN YOU RETURN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE POSTAGE-PAID RETURN ENVELOPE, OR PHONE ME ON (003) 24 3252.

Thanks for your input,
Rob Andrew

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EMPLOYERS

1. N.B. This particular question pertains to all employees, not only M.I.D. employees. Please rank the following in terms of importance as skills for employment:
Scale: 1 = most important, 2= fairly important, 3 = not very important, 4 = of no importance. (Circle for each)

Mathematics.....	1	2	3	4	Honesty, Integrity.....	1	2	3	4
Follow directions..	1	2	3	4	Foreign Language	1	2	3	4
Social Sciences.....	1	2	3	4	No Substance Abuse...	1	2	3	4
Respect Others....	1	2	3	4	Natural Sciences.....	1	2	3	4
Computer Programming	1	2	3	4	Punctuality/ Attendance	1	2	3	4

2. Where an ordinary High School week involves around 25 " hours ", how many of those should be spent *by the student with a Mild Intellectual Disability* on: (circle for each skill area)

LIFE SKILLS.....0,	2,	5,	10,	15,	20,	25
PREVOCATIONAL SKILLS.....0,	2,	5,	10,	15,	20,	25
ACADEMIC SKILLS.....0,	2,	5,	10,	15,	20,	25
SOCIAL SKILLS.....0,	2,	5,	10,	15,	20,	25

3. Which stage of regular schooling (i.e. mainstream) is *most* likely to provide an adequate learning program for students with Mild Intellectual Disability? (Circle one)

Kinder *Prep/1/2* *3 - 6*

7/8 *9/10* *11/12* *T.A.F.E.*

4. Do you think that M.I.D. students should begin Work Experience programs *at least three years* before the end of their schooling?

Y N unsure

5. *Would you be prepared to offer any of the various periods of Work Experience over a year's length (e.g. in five-day blocks) to an M.I.D. student of the following ages? PLEASE NOTE THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR STUDENT PLACEMENT. (Circle response in each box)*

	10 days	30 days
Grade 7	Yes / No	Yes / No
Grade 8	Yes / No	Yes / No
Grade 9	Yes / No	Yes / No
Grade 10	Yes / No	Yes / No

6. *Would you be prepared to offer 120 hrs of Work Placement (unpaid) to M.I.D. students of the following ages? **Note, a T.C.E. Grade 11 & 12 Syllabus has recently been made available, requiring 120 hrs / yr of Work Placement.** Examples given include 1 day / wk.; 3 blocks of 2 weeks; or a single block of 5 weeks. (Circle Yes or No)*

Grade 11 ..... **Yes / No** **Grade 12** .... **Yes / No**

7. *If there are any conditions under which you would change any of the above responses from No to Yes , please state briefly what they are:*.....
.....
.....

8. *What* **preparation** *and/or* **on-site help** *would you expect from school personel for M.I.D. students on Work Experience in your work-site?*
.....
.....
.....

9. *Under what conditions would you <u>employ</u> an M.I.D person ? (tick any or all)*

- ○ none
- ○ weekly on-site visits from a job-trainer
- ○ under-award wages (value-for-work)
- ○ reduced working hours (pro-rata pay)
- ○ off-site training for part of each week
- ○ short "trial period"

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please use the *ENCLOSED POSTAGE - PAID ENVELOPE* to return it to me as soon as possible.

Rob Andrew

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
P.O. BOX 1214
LAUNCESTON 7250

APPENDIX III

The Student Interview Schedules

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

(Stem questions in bold, probes in plain)

1. **How did you like school when you first went?** Did you have things you enjoyed doing? What sorts of things were hard? What was the hardest?

2. (if pertinent)
How did you feel about going to special school? Was there any difference? Can you explain them?

3. Either
How do feel about going to high school? Are you looking forward to some things? Are you unsure about some others?
or
What was it like to go from primary school to high school? What were you thinking might be good? What were you thinking after you got used to it?

4. **Who are your friends?** Do you have good friends at school now? Do they do the same classes as you?

5. **What do you think school is for?** What do you want to say you learned? What would your friends answer, do you think?

6. **What are the best things at school that you do?** Are there things you learn outside the school?

7. **What is hard for you?** Why do you think they are hard? Who helps you if it gets too hard? Do you tell your family?

8. **Do you get to choose any of the things you learn?** Do you get to choose enough? Could you make good choices?

9. **Which teachers know you the best?** Which teachers do you know the best?

10. **Do you like playtime and lunchtime?** How do you spend them?

11. **Do you like to show your parents (or foster parents) what you've been doing at school?** Do you think reports show them what you've been doing? What do you like to show them? What do you think of Records of Achievement?

12. **When you leave school, what do you want to do?** Do you think your parents have ideas about what you will do?

SECOND STUDENT INTERVIEW

1. **What was it like when you first went to school?**.What was the difference for you between primary school and high school?
2. **What grade were you in when you felt school was best for you?** Can you remember what it was like changing from K-P? 2-3? 6-7? 9-10? 10-11? Tell me about those changes.
3. **What things did you enjoy most at primary school?** What would you change about primary school if you had that time over again?
4. **What differences did you find in your lessons after you went into your high school classes?** Tell me about your friends.
5. **What do you think school is for?** Why do we go to school? What did you think school was for when you were in grade 3?
6. **What do you think about high school?** What would you change about your high school time? (if appropriate: **What about Secondary College?** How was that for you?
7. **What sorts of things do you want to do when you finish school?** What did you learn or do at high school that will help you to do do what you want when you leave? At secondary College? What about other places like the Launceston Student Workshop?
8. **How did you feel about going to high school/ Launceston Student Workshop (whichever applies) before you did go?** After you made the move?
9. **What did you miss out on?** Why?
10. **What sorts of things have made it easier for you to get ready for after leaving school?** What has made it tougher? (possible probe regarding parents, strengths and weaknesses, siblings etc.)
11. **What do you think about special schools and ordinary schools?**
12. **How much of school should be for just having experiences and fun, and how much should be for getting ready life after school?**
13. **What would be the best sort of things for you to do before leaving school?** Who has helped you the most to get what you need for after you leave school? Who had been the biggest help in figuring out what to do after you leave school? (probe parent/teachers/peers/family/T.V., movies)
14. **What skills do you have for getting by after you leave school?** (probe friendship making and keeping, keeping well, managing a flat etc.) What sorts of things do you still need to get better at before you'll feel really confident? (probe sharing/living with others, living or travelling with/ without family)
15. **Do you imagine you'll do some sorts of lessons or go to any courses after you finish school?** What sorts of things will you learn? (probe driver training, travel) Do you learn better in school classes or away from school? Why? Did you have chances to learn away from
16. **How much do you know about what there is to do after you leave school?** Who would you get ideas from? Do you know what your friends are thinking about doing after they leave school? How different are their plans from yours?
17. **When I write this conversation up, what would you like me to tell all the people who will read it--about school and what sorts of things people with the same sorts of needs as you should do and learn?**

APPENDIX IV

Parent Interview Schedules

FIRST INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH PARENTS

(Stem questions are in bold, probes in plain type)

1. **How would you describe your child as a student?** How would you compare your child to most of the other children you know?

2. **What sort of a child were you at home and at school?** Were you sporting, bookish, musical? Were you easy to manage? Did you have any contact with a special school yourself as a child?

3. **Is it easy for you to help your child with reading or other learning?** How much help do you get with this task? Would you like some more help? What sort?

4. **Does your child enjoy school?** What does he like and what does he dislike about school? Does he talk to you about this?

5. **How do his difficulties affect his learning?** How does he cope when he copes and how do troubles arise if they do?

6. **What learning activities do you think have been best for your child's development?** Would he/she agree with you?

7. **What sorts of things have been either useless or a hindrance?** Once again, would your child agree?

8. **Is there a way that could have seen more of the good things occurring and less of the not-so good?** Could you have had more input? Should your child have had more say?

9. **What do you think your child should be learning this year?** What subjects will help him most? How should he be taught? Any changes to last year? Do you see practical activity or repetition or any other sort of learning as being most useful?

10. **How does your child feel about what he'll be doing this year?** What help did he want or get in choosing the school or subjects? Does it fit with what he wants to do when he's older?

11. **What do you want for your child, overall, from his education?** What do you want for him at the end of it? How do you see what he has learned being of use to him in the future?

12. **What do you want your child to have to show from it all?** Are you or your child interested in records of achievement, work-folders, photos, certificates, TCE's, references etc.

13. **How important is his ability to get along on his own compared to getting a job?** Are work skills more important than independent living skills? Will he go on learning after school?

14. **What sorts of communication skills do you think he should have?** How about reading, writing and counting?

15. **If your child finished school with just one ability, what would you want it to be?**

SCHEDULE OF SECOND INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS

1. **How well has your child been progressing over the past year as a student?** Has he/she been learning valuable things? Do you see this in your home?

2. **Is he/she enjoying school as much now as a year or two before?** What sorts of comments do you hear from her/him about school?

3. **What do other members of the family (extended) have to say about your child's learning or schooling?** Do they have particular ideas about how he/she should proceed in adulthood? How much independence do they encourage for her/him?

4. **What are the best things about your student's learning program over this year?** Is this the same as asking what's the most useful learning done?

5. **What sorts of records are you anticipating or looking forward to having at the year's end?** Does your child have any idea of what sorts of documentation they would like to have?Any certificates or such? Would the same as last year do?

6. **What have been the less successful or less useful things to have happened?** What should be done to sort this out?

7. **How does your child feel about what he/she will be doing next year?**

8. **How well informed do you feel you are about all the subjects that your child could be doing next year?** Have you been more aware of this year's program offered?

9. **Does your child need more or less daily living skills next year?** Do you think there should be more or fewer academic lessons as part of their school week?

10. **How capable do you feel your child is to make good choices about his/her own courses next year?** How much say are you able to give them? How much input has been invited from you?

11. **How do you envisage your child living after finishing his/her education?** Will he/she live independently? In a group home? Do you think they will have been adequately prepared by then?

12. **How important is it that he/ she has a paid job after finishing schooling?** Is this more important than being able to get along on his/her own or away from home?

APPENDIX V

Teacher Interview Schedule

INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS:

Probe questions for interview. These are to be broached as areas covered are touched upon or independent of the drift, if necessary.

1. **Which curricular areas are most/least appropriate for MID students?**
2. **Any differences before they undertake TCE subjects?**
3. **How could curriculum be better arranged for MID students at all levels?**
4. **What collaboration do you see as useful or necessary? With which other providers?**
5. **How effective is the TCE reporting/assessing process for MID students?**
6. **What about Records of Achievement? Do they work?**
7. **Who do you listen to when you're planning for MID students?**
8. **What differences do you perceive in curicular needs of the majority from MID students?**
9. **Are MID' students' needs any different from the majority or from any other groups?**
10. **Are there any factors which mitigate against success in the curriculum for MID students?**

APPENDIX VI

Teachers' Post-interview Supplementary Survey Exercise

Post-interview survey to teachers

Dear .....,

Thank you for help with the interview. As mentioned, this take-away exercise is to help gain a clearer picture of the skill domains as they are met by Mildly Intellectually Disabled adolescents in your school. Please add any "subjects" that I've omitted.

The question is: *What emphasis, in both content and outcomes, do you see being given by teachers of the following subjects at your school in classes where MID students are included?*

I've included a sheet which describes the skill domains for the purposes of the exercise. Your responses are relative percentages (e.g., Life Skills may be be receiving from the teacher an emphasis of 25% relative to the other domains).

Please make each row total 100 (e.g. 25: 20: 35: 25)

Grade 7 subject	Emphasis in school given to each Curriculum Domain (as relative percentage)			
	Academic Skills	Social Skills	Life Skills	Pre-voc. skills
English/Language				
Maths				
Studies of Society				
Science				
Technology				
Health/Pers.Dev't				
Phys. Ed.				
Computer use				
Arts				
LOTE				

Post-interview survey to teachers, cont'd

Please use the same process for Grade 9 learning areas in your school:

Grade 9 subject	Emphasis in school given to each Curriculum Domain (as relative percentage)			
	Academic Skills	Social Skills	Life Skills	Pre-voc. skills
English (115)				
Maths for Living				
Skills for Learn'g				
Studies of Society				
Science				
Design in Wood				
Health/Pers.Dev't				
Phys. Ed.				
Computer use				
Basic Catering				
Art				
LOTE				

Please return the forms to ..... at the school office so that I can collect them. Thanks again.

APPENDIX VII

Locus of Control Assessment Instrument

The Knight Adaptive Behaviour Locus of Control Scale
(Knight, 1988)

CHILD NO.: _____ D.O.B. _____

SCHOOL: _____

This sheet shows what kids your age think about some things. There are no right or wrong answers. Please give the answer which usually applies to you.

Note. *Statements = Internal Response

1. When you don't understand something, is it
   * (a) because you didn't really listen, or (I*)
   (b) because it's too hard?
2. When you get things wrong, is it
   * (a) because you don't listen carefully, or (I*)
   (b) because the teacher does not explain things enough?
3. When you do things well, is it
   (a) because they are easy, or
   * (b) because you work carefully? (I*)
4. If you couldn't follow the teacher's instructions, is it
   * (a) because you aren't good at some things, (I*) or
   (b) because the teacher gives hard instructions?
5. When people understand what you say, is it
   (a) because they are paying attention, or
   * (b) because you talk clearly? (I*)
6. If you can teach another child how to play a game, is it
   (a) because the game is easy to play, or
   * (b) because you can explain things well? (I*)
7. When the teacher can't understand your writing, is it
   (a) because he/she didn't read it properly, or
   * (b) because you didn't write it well? (I*)
8. When you retell a TV show in your own words, is it
   * (a) because you can remember things, or (I*)
   (b) because the story was easy to tell?
9. When you can't read a book, is it:
   (a) the teacher's fault, or
   * (b) your fault? (I*)
10. When you use a dictionary correctly, is it:
    * (a) because you worked on it carefully, or (I*)
    (b) because it wasn't very hard?
11. When you find it difficult to write neatly, is it:
    * (a) because you don't practice it enough, or (I*)
    (b) because the teacher doesn't give you enough time to write neatly?
12. When you make your bed, is it:
    * (a) because you remembered to make it, or (I*)
    (b) because somebody tells you to make it?
13. When you get sick, is it:
    * (a) because you didn't look after yourself, or (I*)
    (b) somebody else's fault because they gave you germs?
14. When you eat food that is good for you, is it:
    (a) because your parents tell you to eat it, or
    * (b) because you want to be healthy? (I*)
15. When you dress yourself (including shoe laceand all buttons and zips), is it:
    (a) because somebody still helps you, or
    * (b) because you have learnt how to dress yourself? (I*)
16. When you do jobs at home, is it:
    * (a) because you want to, or (I*)
    (b) because your parents tell you to?
17. When you don't use good manners at home, is it:
    (a) because nobody reminded you about manners, or
    * (b) because you forgot to use your manners? (I*)
18. If you could sew something would it be
    (a) because it wasn't very hard to sew, or
    * (b) because you worked on it carefully? (I*)
19. If you can't cook something, is it:
    * (a) because you aren't good at cooking, or (I*)
    (b) because the recipe was no good?
20. When you wear a seatbelt in the car, is it:
    * (a) because it makes it safer for you, or (I*)
    (b) because your parents tell you to wear it?
21. When you do your homework, is it:
    (a) because somebody helps you, or
    * (b) because you tried hard? (I*)
22. When you can't remember the road rules, is it:
    * (a) because you don't try to remember them, or (I*)
    (b) because they are too hard to remember?
23. When you can save your money to spend at the show, is it:
    (a) because your parents give you a lot of money, or
    * (b) because you are good at saving money? (I*)
24. When you have no friends at all, is it:
    (a) other people's fault, or
    * (b) your fault? (I*)
25. If other kids are mean to you, is it:
    (a) because not one likes you, or
    * (b) because you aren't good at making friends? (I*)
26. When another kid becomes your friend, is it:
    * (a) because you made friends with him/her, or (I*)
    (b) because he/she has got no other friends?
27. When you can't change another kid's mind about something, is it:
    (a) because he/she is a mean person, or
    * (b) because you didn't try hard enough to change his/her mind? (I*)
28. When you <u>usually</u> win at games, is it:
    (a) because you are lucky, or
    * (b) because you play well? (I*)
29. When you can't retell a TV show in your own words, is it:
    * (a) because you weren't interested in the show, or (I*)
    (b) because the TV show was no good?
30. If you win a 'running race', is it:
    (a) because you are born good at running, or
    * (b) because you practise running? (I*)
31. When people listen to you, is it:
    * (a) because you have something interesting to say, or (I*)
    (b) because they are in a good mood?
32. If somebody stole your bike, is it:
    * (a) because you didn't lock it properly, or (I*)
    (b) because you are unlucky?
33. When you obey the school rules, is it:
    * (a) because you know the school rules, or (I*)
    (b) because the teacher reminds you about the school rules?
34. When you forget your lunch, is it:
    (a) because nobody reminded you to take it, or
    * (b) because you didn't remember to bring it?(I*)
35. When you get into trouble, is it: usually
    * (a) because you did something wrong, or (I*)
    (b) because somebody else got you into trouble?
36. When you climb to the top of a very tall tree, is it:
    (a) because it was easy to climb, or
    * (b) because you are good at climbing? (I*)
37. When you catch a ball, is it:
    (a) because the other person throws it well, or
    * (b) because you are good at catching? (I*)
38. If you can't ride a motor bike, is it:
    (a) because it's too hard to ride, or
    * (b) because you haven't practised on it? (I*)
39. When you can't cut out a picture with scissors, is it:
    * (a) because you don't use the scissors carefully enough, or (I*)
    (b) because the scissors are too small or blunt or old?
40. When you don't write neatly, is it:
    * (a) because you don't try hard enough, or (I*)
    (b) because you don't have a sharp pencil or a rubber or a clean desk?

From: Knight, B.A. (1992) The Development of a Locus of Control Measure Designed to Assess Intellectually Disabled Students' Beliefs in Adaptive Behaviour Situations, *Australasian Journal of Special Education*, Vol.16, No. 2, pp.13-2.

Data for MID target students using Locus of Control Test (Knight, 1992)+

(N.B. This data was not used towards the overall research results)

Changes in students over the research period

	Scores				
Students	Predicted*	SD*	Initial Test	Follow-up	Change (+ /-
Paul	11.3	4.1	14 Neg,	6 Neg,	minus 8 Neg,
	8.6	3.2	17 Pos	13Pos	minus 4 Pos
Megan	10.6	2.5	8 Neg,	12 Neg,	plus 4 Neg,
	11.2	2.7	12 Pos	11 Pos	minus 1 Pos
Angelo	11.3	4.1	9 Neg,	13 Neg,	plus 4 Neg,
	8.6	3.2	7 Pos	17 Pos	plus 10 Pos

* Figures obtained from Knight's instrument development sample: mean and Standard Deviation (SD) for male and female data, respectively.

The assessment is scored across 40 items, 20 of which imply acceptance or claiming of responsibility for *positive* consequences, and another 20 interspersed items which imply *negative* consequences. The rationale for this duality is that a student cannot be said to be internalising control unless both positive and negative events are included. If only positives are 'owned' by the student, he is merely a 'fair-weather friend' to himself.

The Locus of Control Measures present a mixed result, with Paul showing considerable regression, Megan with greater acceptance of responsibility for positive consequences, and Angelo progressing very significantly with regard to both positive and negative consequences. All of the follow-up scores, apart from Paul's acceptance of negative consequences, were above Knight's (1992) predicted figures.

+*From*: Knight, B.A. (1992) The Development of a Locus of Control Measure Designed to Assess Intellectually Disabled Students' Beliefs in Adaptive Behaviour Situations, *Australasian Journal of Special Education*, Vol.16, No. 2, pp. 13-2.

APPENDIX VIII

Tables Of Individual Student Data from Questionnaire to Stakeholders

Tables of Individual Target Students' data.

NOTE: The figures represent median ratings, along with an 'overall' figure derived from averaging those medians. The scale given below the *outcomes* data applies also to the *content* data.

1. PAUL

OUTCOMES

Stakeholder Groups	TCE Certificates	Records of Development	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Community agents	0	2	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
Employers	0	2	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
Parents	1	1.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student peers	1	1.6	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Taxpayers	0	2	4	2.5	3.5	3	4	3	3.5	4
Teachers	1	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Overall	0.9	2.3	3.1	3.8	3.9	3.6	4	3.6	3.6	4

key:
0=not important; 1= a small need; 2= desirable; 3= fairly importance;
4= of great importance.

CONTENT

Stakeholder Groups	Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	Social skills	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	1	1	3	1	0
Community agents	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	3	3	2
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	4	4
Parents	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	1	2	3	2.5	2
Student peers	3.6	3.1	3	2.1	3.5	3	4	1	1	2.6	2.8	2
Taxpayers	4	3.5	4	3.5	3	3	4	0	1	2.5	4	2
Teachers	4	2	2	2	1	2	4	0	0	2	2	1
Overall	3.9	3.4	3.3	2.7	2.9	3.3	3.9	0.7	1.7	2.9	2.8	1.9

2. ANGELO

OUTCOMES

Stakeholder Groups	TCE Certificates	Records of Development	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Community agents	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Parents	2	2.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student peers	2.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Taxpayers	1.5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Teachers	2	3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Overall	2.7	3.6	3.7	3.9	4	3.9	3.9	4	3.9	4

0=not important; 1= a small need; 2= desirable; 3= fairly imortance;
4= of great importance.

CONTENT

Stakeholder Groups	Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	Social skills	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	1	3	1	2
Community agents	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	2
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	4	4
Parents	4	3.5	4	3	4	4	4	2	3.5	3	2	2
Student peers	4	4	4	2.5	4	4	4	2	2.5	3.5	2	2
Taxpayers	4	4	3	3.5	2.5	3.5	4	1	2	4	3.5	2
Teachers	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	2	3	3	2	2
Overall	4	3.9	3.7	3	3.6	3.8	3.9	1.7	2.9	3.5	2.4	2.3

3. MEGAN

OUTCOMES

Stakeholder Groups	TCE Certificates	Records of Development	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Community agents	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4
Employers	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Parents	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student peers	1	3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Taxpayers	1.5	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Teachers	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Overall	1.8	3.4	3.7	4	4	4	3.9	3.9	3.9	4

0=not important; 1= a small need; 2= desirable; 3= fairly importance;
4= of great importance.

CONTENT

Stakeholder Groups	Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	Social skills	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators	4	4	3	2	3	4	4	1	1	2	1	0
Community agents	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	1
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	4	4
Parents	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	1.5	2.5	3	2	1
Student peers	4	4	3.4	3	4	3	4	2	1.5	3	2	2
Taxpayers	4	3.5	3	3	3.5	3	3.5	1.5	1	3	1.5	0
Teachers	4	4	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	2	2	3	2	1
Overall	4	3.8	3.3	3	3.6	3.5	3.8	1.6	2.1	3	2.1	1.3

4. SALLY

OUTCOMES

Stakeholder Groups	TCE Certificates	Records of Development	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Community agents	1	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
Employers	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Parents	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student peers	2	2.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Taxpayers	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.5	4
Teachers	2	3	3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Overall	1.9	3.1	3.8	4	4	3.9	4	4	3.8	4

0= not important; 1= a small need; 2= desirable; 3= fairly important;
4= of great importance.

CONTENT

Stakeholder Groups	Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	Social skills	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	1	1	3	1	1
Community agents	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	1	4	3	3	1
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4
Parents	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	1	4	2	1
Student peers	4	3	4	4	4	3.5	4	2	1	4	2.4	1
Taxpayers	4	3	3.5	4	3	3	4	1.5	1	4	2.5	1
Teachers	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	1.5	2	3	2	1
Overall	4	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.5	4	1.6	2	3.6	2.4	1.4

5. PETER

OUTCOMES

Stakeholder Groups	TCE Certificates	Records of Development	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Community agents	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Employers	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2
Parents	1.5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student peers	1.8	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Taxpayers	1	1.5	3.5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Teachers	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Overall	1.8	2.6	3.8	4	4	4	4	4	3.7	3.7

0 = not important; 1 = a small need; 2 = desirable; 3 = fairly importance;
4 = of great importance.

CONTENT

Stakeholder Groups	Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	Social skills	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	1	2	0	1	0
Community agents	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	1	4	2	2	3
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	4	4
Parents	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	1.5	2.5	3	3	3.5
Student peers	3.5	3	4	2	3	3.6	4	1.3	2	3	4	4
Taxpayers	3.5	3	4	3.5	3	4	4	0	1.5	2.5	2	2.5
Teachers	4	3.5	4	4	3	3	4	1	3	3	2.5	3
Overall	3.9	3.6	4	3.2	3.1	3.7	4	1.1	2.6	2.1	2.6	2.9

6. KEITH

OUTCOMES

Stakeholder Groups	TCE Certificates	Records of Development	Work or job skills	Independence of living	Self care and health	Social strengths	Happiness/Contentment	Effective communication	Reading/Writing to potential	Fulfilment/Accomplishment
Administrators	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Community agents	2	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
Employers	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Parents	2	2.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student peers	2	2.3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Taxpayers	2	2.5	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.5	4
Teachers	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Overall	2.4	2.9	3.9	4	4	3.9	4	4	3.6	4

0 = not important; 1= a small need; 2 = desirable; 3 = fairly importance; 4 = of great imp.

CONTENT

Stakeholder Groups	Life skills	Basic reading & writing	Manual skills	Craft skills	Work-finding	Health,phys & sport/Leisure	Social skills	TCE main curriculum	Driver training	Pre-work training	Gardening skills	Farm-work skills
Administrators	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	2	4	3	3	4
Community agents	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	1	4	4	3	4
Employers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4
Parents	4	4	4	3	3.5	4	4	2	4	4	3	4
Student peers	4	3.6	4	2.1	3.8	3.3	4	1.6	4	4	3.5	4
Taxpayers	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2	4	3.5	2	3.5	4	3	3.5
Teachers	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	3.5
Overall	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.1	3.3	3.6	3.9	1.8	3.9	3.9	3.2	3.9

APPENDIX IX

Worker Characteristics Valued by Employers

(Data from Questionnaire to Employers)

Workers' Attributes Valued by Employers (N=30)

Scale: 1= most important; 2= fairly important; 3= not very important; and 4= of no importance

Employer Size	Mathematics	Follow Directions	Social Sciences	Respect Others	Computer Programming	Honesty/Integrity	Foreign Language	No Substance Abuse	Natural Sciences	Punctuality/Attendance
	Attributes									
1 to 3 employees	2	1	3	1	2	1	4	3	3	1
(n=2)	2	4	2	4	1	4	1	4	3	4
	4	4	2	4	2	4	1	1	2	4
	1	1	2	1	2	1	4	1	2	1
	3	3	2	4	3	4	2	2	2	3
4 to 9 employees	2	1	3	2	4	2	4	2	4	1
(n=8)	2	1	3	2	4	1	4	4	2	2
	2	1	3	2	3	1	4	1	2	1
	1	1	3	1	4	1	3	2	3	1
	2	1	3	2	4	1	4	4	2	2
	1	1	3	1	3	1	4	2	4	1
	2	1	4	1	2	1	4	1	4	1
	2	1	3	2	4	1	4	3	3	2
	2	1	3	1	2	1	4	1	4	1
10 to 49 empl.	2	1	3	2	3	1	4	2	3	1
(n=11)	2	1	3	1	3	1	4	1	3	1
	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
	1	2	3	2	3	1	4	2	3	1
	2	1	2	2	3	1	4	4	3	2
	2	1	3	1	4	1	4	2	3	1
	3	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1
	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	3	1
	2	2	3	2	4	2	4	2	3	2
	1	2	3	2	4	1	4	2	4	1
over 50 empl.	2	1	2	1	3	1	4	1	2	1
(n=9)	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	4	1
	1	1	2	1	3	1	4	2	3	1
	1	2	3	2	4	1	4	2	4	1
	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	4	1
	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
Median	2.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	4	2.0	3	1
Average	1.9	1.4	2.8	1.7	3.0	1.4	3.5	1.9	3.0	1.4
Rank (from Avge)	5	1	6	4	7	1	8	5	7	3
Top 5 ranked (*)	*	*		*		*		*		*

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